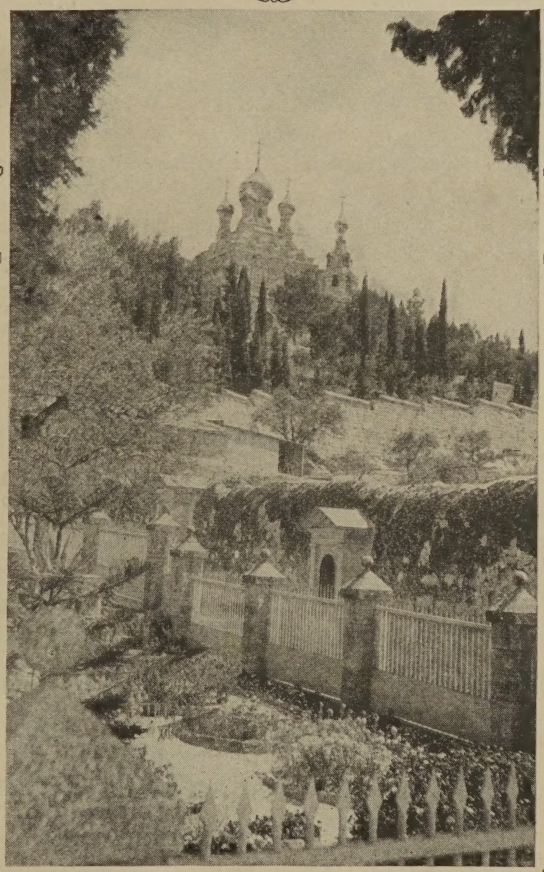
The Westminster Senior Intermediate Quarterly

JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH

1921



Edited by John T. Faris D.D.

The Presbyterian Board of Publication & Sabbath School Work, Philadelphia.

ORDERS OF SERVICE FOR THE FIRST QUARTER, 1921[1]

Opening Service, No. 1

Piano Plays Softly.—One verse of "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Silent Prayer.

Hymn.—"Alleluia," No. 20. "Angel Voices, Ever Singing."

Responsive Verses.—"The Beatitudes."

Supt.—Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

School.—Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Supt.—Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

School.—Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Supt.—Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

School.—Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Supt.—Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

The Lord's Prayer.

The Lesson.—(Read responsively.)

Special Music.—(Instrumental or vocal.)

Missionary Address.—(Five minutes.)

Marking Attendance Records and Offering.

Missionary Hymn.—"Alleluia," No. 140. "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations."

Prayer Before Lesson.

Lesson Period.

Piano.—One verse, "Take Time to Be Holy."

Hymn.—"Alleluia," No. 175. "Faith of Our Fathers."

Reports and Announcements.

Hymn.—"Alleluia," No. 124. "The Son of God Goes Forth to War."

Benediction by the Pastor.

Opening Service, No. 2

The Doxology.—"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."

Opening Sentences.—Psalm 100.

Supt.—Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all ye lands.

School.—Serve Jehovah with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.

Supt.—Know ye that Jehovah, he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and we are his;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

School.—Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:

Supt.—Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.

School.—For Jehovah is good; his lovingkindness endureth for ever,

Supt.—And his faithfulness unto all generations.

Hymn.—"Alleluia," No. 123. "Brightly Gleams Our Banner."

The Ten Commandments.

Silent Prayer.—Piano plays softly one verse of "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

Hymn.—"Alleluia," No. 46. "Jesus Calls Us, O'er the Tumult."

The Lesson.—(Read responsively.)

Solo, Quartet, or Instrumental Music.

Marking Attendance Records and Offering.

Hymn.—"Alleluia," No. 103. "Break Thou the Bread of Life."

Prayer Before Lesson.

The Lesson Period.

Piano.—One verse of "My Faith Looks Up to Thee."

Superintendent's Remarks.

Secretary's Report.

Hymn.—"Alleluia," No. 127. "O Zion, Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling."

Closing Prayer.

[1] Extra copies of these Orders of Service, on heavy paper, may be ordered of the publishers at 50 cents a hundred

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FOREWORD

We have come to the beginning of a new quarter, and to the beginning of a new year. The new year finds us continuing the study of the life of Christ, and when all the years have gone this still will be our study and our joy.

The last quarter brought us to the crisis of Christ's public ministry, within a year of his death. This quarter we concentrate entirely upon the last year of our Lord's life. Let us be careful in our endeavor to master these lessons, to keep close to the Bible text. The Quarterly is not a substitute for the Bible. It is only a guide to the proper understanding of the Bible text. Read carefully all the verses connected with each lesson, whether printed in the Quarterly or not, and as the steps of Jesus are followed to the end, the beauty of his life, the majesty of his death, and the joy of his resurrection will become a living and an abiding reality.

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Hugh T. Kerr

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THE CHILD AND THE KINGDOM

The Golden Text—"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. 18 : 4.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 18: 1-14

1 In that hour came the disciples unto Je'sus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?
2 And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them,
3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.
4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me:
6 But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.
7 Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh!
8 And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire.
9 And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire.
10 See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.
12 How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray?
13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray.
14 Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

The Time—A.D. 29. **The Place**—Capernaum.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, December 27	The Childlike Spirit	Matt. 18 : 1-7.
Tuesday, December 28	God's Care for Children	Matt. 18 : 10-14.
Wednesday, December 29	The Model Child	Luke 2 : 40-52.
Thursday, December 30	God Calls a Child	I Sam. 3 : 1-10.
Friday, December 31	A Child, God's Messenger	I Sam. 3 : 11-19.
Saturday, January 1	A Child Dedicated to God	Luke 2 : 21-32.
Sunday, January 2	The Pure in Heart	Ps. 24 : 1-6.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

1. Greatest. The disciples could not settle the claim of the rivals for first place, so they came to Jesus. They thought that Jesus was about to establish an earthly kingdom.

2. A little child. There is an old tradition that the child was Ignatius, who became a martyr. As Jesus was at Peter's house, perhaps it was one of the children of the home.

3. Turn. Conversion is a "right-about face." By their rivalry the disciples had turned their backs on the true Kingdom.

4. Humble himself. A little child has no pride, is teachable, and easily satisfied. The spirit of childhood may belong to any age.

6. Cause . . . to stumble. The offense was in causing a childlike soul to perish through selfish pride. **A millstone.** The expression means "a millstone turned by an ass." This refers to a great millstone, used in grinding corn. Smaller stones were turned by hand.

10. Their angels. See Heb. 1 : 14, also Acts 12 : 15. Only those of the highest rank see the King's face. God gives the highest place to childlikeness.

THE LESSON CONNECTION

With this lesson is continued the study of Matthew's Gospel. The lessons of the quarter begin at ch. 18 and will conclude the study of Matthew's Gospel at the end of the quarter, which comes on Easter Sunday.

The last lesson of the preceding quarter was taken from Matt., ch. 14, and there are therefore three very important chapters between the lesson to-day and the last regular lesson.

The last lesson of the last quarter dealt with the feeding of the five thousand. After that wonderful miracle the people were so excited and so enthusiastic about Jesus that they came to make him an earthly king by force. Jesus, however, did not wish this kind of popularity, and so he hid himself from the multitude. With this lesson we begin the last year of his life, and during this year he

gave nearly all his time to the training of the Twelve.

THE STORY OF CH. 15

In the section from ch. 14 to ch. 17, Matthew has grouped some of the most important events in the life of Jesus. In the last lesson was studied the story of the feeding of the five thousand and the miracle of Jesus walking on the water. In ch. 15 are three very interesting events. The first tells how the Pharisees criticized Jesus and his disciples for eating with unwashed hands. Ch. 15 : 1-20. The Jews were very particular about having clean hands, but were not careful to have clean hearts. Jesus told them that a clean heart is the most important thing in the world. If the heart is pure the whole life will be clean. The next section, vs. 21-28, tells about Jesus' leaving his own country and going with his disciples along the shore of the Mediterranean to Tyre and Sidon. Trace the journey on the map. In this foreign country Jesus met a woman whose daughter was very sick and whom she brought to Jesus. Jesus, in order to try her faith, hesitated to help her. Read how her faith rose to meet Jesus' test, and how Jesus, after saying, "O woman, great is thy faith," healed her daughter. Sometimes God blesses us because of the faith of our fathers and mothers.

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THE CHILD IN THE MIDST

The third event in ch. 15 is the feeding of the four thousand. Vs. 29-39. This story is very much like that of the feeding of the five thousand, but there are some differences. Point out what these differences are.

THE GREAT CONFESSION

In ch. 16 the Pharisees demanded that Jesus give them a sign from heaven, but he refused and told them that they sought a sign not in order to increase their faith but because they were curious. Jesus then took the twelve disciples to Cæsarea Philippi and there in quietness he asked them, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Their answer is interesting for it shows us what the people of Jesus' own age thought about him. They said that, while some thought he was John the Baptist—others thought he was Elijah, and others still Jeremiah. Now these three men were great heroes, men of courage, and of great moral loneliness, and the people thought Jesus was like them. Then Jesus asked his disciples, "Who say ye that I am?" and Peter immediately said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This answer pleased Jesus, who said that Peter had had this answer revealed to him by the Spirit of God. Jesus is not satisfied when we tell what others say about him. He wants us to answer for ourselves the question, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" What is your answer? We, too, must make our great confession.

Although Jesus spoke such high words of praise about Peter because of his great confession, Jesus strongly rebuked Peter before the chapter closes. Jesus had told his disciples that he would at last be

killed, but Peter said to Jesus, "God have mercy on thee: this shall never be unto thee!" (See marginal reading of ch. 16 : 22.) Jesus rebuked Peter and told him that he thought as a man, and not as God for the path to the cross is the path to the crown. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it." Jesus more and more showed the disciples that his Kingdom means service and sacrifice.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

The story of ch. 17 is one of the most wonderful in the Bible. Read it from the first verse to the last. In the night Jesus took Peter and James and John up into a mountain—probably Mount Hermon—and there as he prayed he was transfigured; his face became radiant as the light, and his garments white and luminous. There Moses and Elijah appeared to him and God spoke the words, "This is my beloved Son." The conversation on the holy mount was about Jesus' death. Elijah had entered heaven without dying, and God had buried Moses with his own hand, but Jesus was to enter heaven from the cross. Peter wished to stay on the mount but Jesus turned his back upon heaven and came back into the life on earth with its sin and sorrow. At the foot of the mountain he found a poor, suffering boy and his father. The disciples had been unable to heal the lad, but Jesus cured him instantly. It is a wonderful story of unselfishness and of service, and reveals to us the true character of Christ.

Then comes the story of the tribute money, and the lesson assigned for particular study.

Try to think through the events of these three chapters so that they will be clear to you and you can follow the unbroken story of Jesus' life.

THE LESSON STORY

Who Is the Greatest?

Matt. 18 : 1

The disciples on the way to Capernaum, had been disputing who was the greatest. Many interesting sidelights are given in Mark 9 : 33-37, and Luke 9 : 46-48. The transfiguration had raised the hopes of Peter and James and John, so that perhaps they were rivals for the highest place. Not being able to settle the dispute among themselves, they came to Jesus, but in his presence they were ashamed to ask his opinion. He, however, knew what was in their hearts and answered them by setting a little child in their midst. Luke 22 : 24. Jesus, himself, in paying the Temple tax had given them a lesson in humility, but they had not taken it to heart. Matt. 17 : 24-27. This dispute among the disciples should not be confused with the demand of James and John that they sit one on his right hand and one on his left hand in the Kingdom. (See Matt. 20 : 20-28.) The disciples were very human and had failed to understand the gospel. We must not blame them too severely, for after so many centuries of Christian teaching, we, too, in our day, often misunderstand. Who would say that the Christians of our day are more childlike than the disciples?

A Little Child

Matt. 18 : 2-4

Jesus taught by object lessons. He took a little child and set him in the midst and said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." They were going in the wrong direction after greatness. They must turn around and become childlike. In the Kingdom of God, childlike souls are the greatest. What, then, is it to be childlike? It is to be humble, teachable—to be like Christ, meek and lowly in heart. The gospel of Jesus is the only religion in the world that gives not only a place, but the supreme place, to a little child. To receive a little child in Jesus' name is the true test of the Christian life. By receiving a little child, Jesus of course meant welcoming the childlike temper, the humble heart, whatever the age may be. "The disciple who wins the high honor of receiving Christ is he who welcomes children, not because he is fond of children, but because they represent Christ." The attractiveness of the childlike character ought to be felt by Christians, for such a character is like Christ's own character.

The Great Offense

Matt. 18 : 6-10

The loveliness and the beauty of childlikeness suggest the dreadful guilt of those who would in any way mar that beauty. To ruin a beautiful character by causing others to sin is to merit the most severe punishment. It were better for the one who causes the innocent to stumble, that he were drowned in the sea. It is true that the world is full of temptation, but we are responsible for our own influence. To seduce others to evil is the worst of sins. Jesus also suggested that it is possible to lead ourselves, as it were, into evil and to seduce ourselves to do wrong. It is better to sacrifice the lower for the higher and to surrender the better for the best. Just as one may submit to an operation and lose an arm or a leg in order to save the whole body from disease, so it is best to surrender any thing rather than lose the soul. Hands and feet and eyes are all good, but if they lead us into evil we are better without them.

The test of childlikeness, of humility and unselfish love, is, after all, the way in which we treat a little child. Every little child is of infinite worth to God. To lead a child astray is to deny the spirit of the gospel. The highest angels in heaven are those who represent little children. "God has commissioned the most glorious of all his creatures to be sponsors for little children."

The Lost Sheep

Matt. 18 : 12-14

Jesus pointed out that God himself cares for children just as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Read

the beautiful parable as given in Luke 15 : 3-7. If even one sheep from among a hundred is lost the shepherd will leave all to find the one, and will rejoice over it when it is found. So God takes care of his own, and if he takes so much trouble to recover a little one that has strayed, how grievous must it be to cause it to stray! Jesus himself is the great Shepherd, who carries in his arms the children and all who are childlike in heart.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

After the wonderful experience of the transfiguration, the disciples quarreled about first place.

The true test of a Christian is childlikeness. Christianity cares for childhood.

To hurt the life of another is to sin against God.

God is like a shepherd; he helps, he seeks, he finds, he saves.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. How is this lesson connected with the lesson of the last quarter?
2. Give some of the events recorded in chs. 15 to 17.
3. What connection has the transfiguration with the lesson?
4. Why is a little child great in the Kingdom of God?
5. In what ways can we hurt the lives of others?
6. Why is God like a shepherd?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 1. What do we most need to know?

A. We most need to know what God would have us believe and do.

Q. 2. Where do we best learn what God would have us believe and do?

A. We best learn what God would have us believe and do in the Bible.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. What is meant by Peter's "great confession"?
2. What was the purpose of the transfiguration?
3. At what time in the life of Christ does our lesson take place?
4. What was the occasion of the disciples' dispute?
5. How does modern society cause little children to stumble?
6. What place is given in other religions to childhood?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Lesson II—JESUS TEACHING FORGIVENESS

The Golden Text—"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." —Matt. 6 : 14.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 18: 21-35

21 Then came Pe'ter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?

22 Je'sus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not *wherewith* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest.

29 So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due.

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due.

35 So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

The Time—A.D. 29. **The Place**—Capernaum.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, January 3	A Story About Forgiveness	Matt. 18 : 21-27.
Tuesday, January 4	An Unforgiving Spirit	Matt. 18 : 28-35.
Wednesday, January 5	Repentance and Forgiveness	Luke 15 : 10-19.
Thursday, January 6	A Father Forgives His Boy	Luke 15 : 20-24.
Friday, January 7	A Brother Forgives His Brethren	Gen. 45 : 4-15.
Saturday, January 8	A Prayer for Forgiveness	Ps. 51 : 1-9.
Sunday, January 9	A Prayer for Forgiveness	Ps. 51 : 10-19.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

24. Ten thousand talents. A great sum. About ten million dollars of our money. A sum impossible for him to pay, as is our debt to God.

25. To be sold. The Old Testament regarded a man's wife and children as his property. Lev. 25 : 39; II Kings 4 : 1. The reference, however, may be to the Roman law.

28. A hundred shillings. A very little sum, representing the trifling character of our offenses against one another in comparison to our sin against God.

34. Tormentors. Torture was neither a Jewish nor a Roman custom. The reference is to an Eastern despot. Torture would be used to make the debtor disclose where the treasure had been hidden.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

Introduction

Jesus had spoken of the childlike spirit and of God's great care—care like that of a shepherd for his sheep. God's love is unchanging and seeks out the lost. The sheep that is found is rejoiced over. This thought led Jesus to speak of forgiveness. The way God deals with a lost sheep should be the way a man deals with his erring brother. He should seek after him and recover him to peace and fellowship. After pointing this out, Peter in his impulsive way asked Jesus how often an offending brother should be forgiven. The Jews said three times, but Jesus said that there was no limit. He then told the parable of "The Unmerciful Servant," who had been forgiven a great sum by his royal master, but who refused to forgive his own servant a trifling sum. Jesus passed condemnation upon the man and suggested that our debt to God, which is so great and which we are unable to pay, should make us kind and forgiving to our brethren whose offenses against us in comparison to our offenses against God, are trifling and insignificant. The entire lesson deals with Jesus' teaching about forgiveness.

The Duty of Forgiveness

Matt. 18 : 15-18

Jesus had been speaking of God's search for the lost sheep. He did not tell us the method God used to find the lost, but he did tell his disciples the methods they should use in recovering a lost brother. When another Christian has sinned against us, we are first of all to go to him alone and tell him his fault and try by personal entreaty to win him back to friendship and to God. If this fails, the second step is to remonstrate with him when two or more fellow Christians are with us. Deut. 19 : 15.

These are witnesses not to the wrong done, but to the attempt at reconciliation. If this method fails, the third step is to "tell it to the church," that is, to take the matter before the whole body of Christians. The erring brother cannot charge unfairness on the part of the entire Church, and all that is required is that he should ask forgiveness. No word about punishment is spoken. If this effort fails, everything is done that can be done, and the erring brother is to be no longer treated as a Christian, but as one who has not yielded his heart to Christ. Thus would he test our loyalty to him by the spirit of forgiveness. A Christian may be defined as one who is willing to forgive when wrong is confessed, or one who is willing to confess when wrong is committed.

The Authority of the Church

Matt. 18 : 19, 20

The brother who refuses to confess his sin after he has been admonished by the Church may object, saying that the opinion of the Church was not final. To his objections Jesus said that the opinion was final so far as he is concerned. The Church, which is really the Christian people meeting together, has authority to decide, and its decision is ratified in heaven. The reason given by Jesus is that he, himself, is present where two or three are gathered in his name, seeking to do his will, and to obey his Spirit. The Jews themselves held that "the holy and blessed God is present in the synagogue." The Jews held that "it is certain that when ten persons are praying, the divine Majesty is present." Jesus said that if two or more Christians shall come into spiritual agreement concerning anything it is then plain that they have found their agreement in Christ. It is because Jesus himself is present. This is a convincing argument for Christ's divinity, and a remarkable encouragement to unite together in prayer. It is also a warning against defying or refusing to follow the judgment of the Church.

Of course the saying in Matthew does not mean that God is pledged to grant whatever any two persons agree to ask. His will is to grant what is best for them, and what two agree about is likely to be good, especially if Christ is with them.

THE LESSON STORY

The Limit of Forgiveness

Matt. 18 : 21, 22

The Gospel of Matthew is always interested in Peter. Peter thought that Jesus' statement about forgiveness was difficult, for all through the previous discussion Jesus had taken it for granted that the injured man had forgiven the injurer in his heart. Jesus not only demanded forgiveness, but looked for an effort on the part of the Christian to win the wrongdoer back from evil. Peter wanted to know how long this spirit of forbearance was to be exercised. If a person is forgiven seven times, is not that enough?

Forgiveness was a favorite subject of discussion among the Pharisees. They limited forgiveness to three times. They argued that this was the measure of God's forgiveness, and man ought not to do more. Jesus taught that in forgiveness there must be no thought of arithmetic. Ten times the limit set by Peter is not enough, and if the number be multiplied again by seven it will still be insufficient. There is no limit to God's forgiveness, and there must be none to ours. Indeed, forgiveness cannot be counted, for when a wrong is forgiven it is absolutely canceled and cannot be reckoned against the wrongdoer again. When God forgives he casts our sins into the sea. He puts them behind his back. He removes them as far as the east is from the west. He remembers them no more.

Let us have faith in God. He is able to save unto the uttermost. There came into a church once upon a time a man in the stupor of drink and he asked the pastor to go with him to the hospital to pray with his wife who was fast slipping over the margin. The pastor looked at him and said: "Why do you come to me?" and then to wake him out of his sin, he added: "Why don't you go to the saloon-keeper and ask him?" "Oh," said the man, "I don't want the saloon-keeper; I want you to pray with my wife. You can help her. You can't help me. The Devil has me all right, but you can help her." Looking him in the face, the minister said to him: "You say the Devil has got you. Do you think that the Devil is stronger than Jesus?" Confessing to his belief in the power of him to whom he once had prayed at his mother's knee, the man said: "No! I believe that Jesus has all power." Then, on his knees, he yielded his life to him whose power never fails.

There is forgiveness with God. If there were not, Christians would have no message. There would be no gospel, and the doors of the Church, instead of swinging open to the world, might as well be closed forever. Jesus was manifested to take away sin and in him is no sin. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The shadow of his cross is upon the world. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.

"Just as I am! Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come."

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JESUS SHOWING HIS DISCIPLES HOW TO FORGIVE

A Parable of Forgiveness

Matt. 18 : 23-34

To illustrate his idea of forgiveness and to show how God forgives Jesus told the parable of the Unmerciful Servant. The story is so simple and the meaning so plain, that the disciples did not ask for an explanation. Jesus told of a king who forgave his servant a great debt. The amount was about ten million dollars in our money. It was absolutely impossible for a servant to pay such an amount. The debtor, penitent, appealed to the king for mercy and was promptly forgiven the entire amount. Then the forgiven servant went out and immediately took one of his fellow servants who

owed him about ten dollars. The man who owed the small sum asked for mercy, but instead of finding forgiveness was cast into prison by the very man who himself had been forgiven by the king. When the story was told the king was wroth and delivered him to the "tormentors" saying, "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?"

God is like this merciful king. He forgives us our great debt. The debt is so great that none can pay. Only Christ can redeem us, and because of his great love, God has compassion on us for Jesus' sake and freely forgives us all. God, too, like the king, is angry at an unforgiving spirit for God's forgiveness of us is conditioned upon our willingness to forgive others. We pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." An unforgiving spirit makes it impossible for God to help us. An unforgiving temper is a fatal sin. On the cross Jesus said, "Father, forgive them," and having been forgiven much, we, too, should freely forgive those who sin against us. Those who know how much God has forgiven them will find it easy to forgive others.

God's Forgiveness and Ours

Matt. 18 : 35

There is an old quotation which says, "To err is human, to forgive divine." Forgiveness is characteristic of God. When we, too, cultivate a spirit of forgiveness, we are like God. In the parable of the Unmerciful Servant Jesus points out several facts about God's forgiveness and ours. (1) Our debt to God is greater than we can pay. The man owed the great sum of ten thousand talents and yet he was only a servant. The words of the hymn say truly:

"Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone."

(2) Our debt to God involves others. The unmerciful servant had involved not only himself but his wife and children. Wrongdoing cannot be confined to the wrongdoer. Evil touches the lives of those we love as well as ourselves. (3) God graciously forgives us our debts. We cannot redeem ourselves. "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, . . . but with the precious blood, . . . of Christ." The difficulty is not to find forgiveness but to find a willingness to ask forgiveness. God will abundantly pardon. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (4) God expects us to forgive others. If we are forgiven our great debt to God, it ought to be easy for us to forgive the infinitely smaller debts which we owe to one another. When the king heard of the unforgiving spirit of the man who had been forgiven he was "angry." An unforgiving spirit is un-Christlike. Paul writing to the Ephesian Christians says: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."

The last verse of the lesson is important. "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." True forgiveness comes from the heart and cannot be estimated by seven times or seventy times seven. It is not an act merely, but also a spiritual attitude.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. What attitude should Christians take toward those who have injured them?
2. Why is Jesus present where two or three meet in his name?
3. What did Jesus mean by saying we should forgive "until seventy times seven"?
4. Why are we often like the unmerciful servant of the parable?
5. Why is the forgiveness of the king in the parable like God's forgiveness?
6. Can there be any forgiveness which does not come from the heart?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 3. What is the Bible?

A. The Bible is the Word of God, a collection of books, written by men who were guided by God to teach us about himself and his will.

Q. 4. How is the Bible divided?

A. The Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament containing thirty-nine books and the New Testament containing twenty-seven books.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Connect this lesson with the lesson which we studied last week.
2. Give Christ's method of dealing with wrongdoers.
3. What is the relation of confession to forgiveness?
4. Is it more difficult to find forgiveness than to find penitence?
5. Why cannot we discharge the debt which we owe to God?
6. Why is forgiveness the first step in the Christian life?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Lesson III—OUR ALL FOR THE KINGDOM

The Golden Text—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."—Matt. 19 : 19.

THE LESSON TEXT, MATT. 19: 16-30

16 And behold, one came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, Which? And Je'sus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19 Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet?

21 Je'sus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

22 But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions.

23 And Je'sus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25 And when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved?

26 And Je'sus looking upon *them* said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

27 Then answered Pe'ter and said unto him, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?

28 And Je'sus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Is'ra-el.

29 And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life.

30 But many shall be last *that are* first; and first *that are* last.

The Time—March, A.D. 30. **The Place**—Perea.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, January 10	Our All Belongs to God	Matt. 19 : 16-22.
Tuesday, January 11	God Loveth a Cheerful Giver	Matt. 19 : 23-30.
Wednesday, January 12	The Commandments of the Kingdom	Mark 12 : 28-34.
Thursday, January 13	Who Is My Neighbor?	Luke 10 : 30-37.
Friday, January 14	A Neighborly Spirit	Col. 3 : 12-17.
Saturday, January 15	The Wisdom of the Kingdom	Prov. 8 : 10-18.
Sunday, January 16	The Prayer of the Kingdom	Matt. 6 : 5-15.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

16. One came to him. Usually called "the rich young ruler." Luke calls him a ruler. He would be either a member of the sanhedrin, or a ruler of a synagogue. **Eternal life.** This is the first time this expression is used by Matthew. With all his possessions the young man was still unsatisfied.

20. All these things. The young man thought that he had fully kept the law of God. Leading Jews often made the same boast.

21. Be perfect. Jesus was dealing with an individual case, and not laying down a general principle. Covetousness was this young man's sin. "Though he loved the Kingdom much, he loved money more."

24. Easier for a camel. Jesus points out the impossibility of a rich man's being saved so long as he trusts in his riches. Trust in God is difficult to one who trusts in riches or in anything else.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

Introduction

With this lesson we enter a new chapter in the life of Jesus. Chapter 19 begins by saying that Jesus "departed from Galilee." This was his final farewell to Galilee. He did not return there again till after his resurrection which was now less than six months distant. The time between our last lesson and the crucifixion of our Lord was occupied in service "beyond the Jordan," in the country of Perea. The district of Perea extended east of the Jordan from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. Jesus was not so well known east of the Jordan, and there he could carry on his ministry of healing and teaching without opposition. There, too, Jesus could be more alone with his disciples and have opportunity to teach and train them, which now became his chief concern. Read ch. 19. In this chapter, which contains the lesson, Jesus speaks about

three great subjects—home, little children, and wealth. The principal lesson is about wealth, but it is necessary also to study what Jesus said about home and the children.

Jesus and the Home

Matt. 19 : 3-13

The Pharisees continued to try to entrap Jesus and asked him a question about the law of marriage and divorce. They wished to entangle Jesus in controversy by having him express himself about this subject, either in relation to the Law of Moses, or to the immoral life of Herod. They knew of course that Jesus condemned divorce and the selfish and cruel way men treated women. The way in which the Jews of Jesus' day treated the holy bond of marriage had become a scandal. Jewish teachers taught that "If a man sees a woman handsomer than his wife he may put her away," or, "If the wife cook her husband's food ill she is to be put away." A few Jews still held out against the cruel custom. Jesus said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Ch. 19 : 6. The home is sacred, and anything that breaks down its sacredness is to be condemned. One of the best definitions ever given of home is "The place where we grumble the most and are treated the best." It is the duty of parents and children to make home the dearest place on earth, so that the words "Home Sweet Home" may be said often and truly.

Jesus and Little Children

Matt. 19 : 13-15

In the first lesson of the quarter we had a beautiful lesson about the priceless value of a little child. At that time, in order to teach the disciples humility, Jesus took a little child and, having set him in the midst, said that childlikeness was necessary for entrance into the Christian life. In this lesson it would appear that Jesus was again in a home where there were little children. Perhaps the mother brought the children to him "to say good night and receive his blessing before going to bed." Luke tells us that the children were just babes. The disciples felt that children were not important enough to claim the attention of Jesus. He was busy. His strength was taxed with healing the sick. Why should he spend his strength with children who were perfectly well? But Jesus said, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me." Those words about children are among the most beautiful in the Bible. Jesus has taught both the Church and the world to care for the children. Because of the teaching of Jesus, laws for the protection of children have been passed, schools for teaching them have been built, hospitals for their healing are maintained, and to-day all the world, because of Jesus, thinks socially in terms of the children.

THE LESSON STORY

The Rich Young Ruler

Matt. 19 : 16-22

Jesus has already spoken in this lesson about home and about children, and now he gives instructions concerning wealth. His teaching grew out of a story. The story is one of the most interesting in the Gospels. Read it first of all as given by Matthew in the lesson text, and then compare it with the story as told by Mark 10 : 17 and Luke 18 : 18. It is Luke only who calls the young man a "ruler." Matthew alone tells us he was "young." He is usually called, "the rich young ruler." He may have been a member of the sanhedrin, the Jewish Council, or a ruler of a synagogue. At any rate he was a leader in society, and a young man of fine presence and good habits. He was so attractive that Jesus loved him. Mark tells us that he came "running" to Jesus with the question about eternal life upon his lips. The young man thought that he could obtain eternal life by doing something. Jesus told him that he must be something. He had by his own confession kept perfectly the Commandments, and yet he was dissatisfied and heart hungry. Perhaps he thought that Jesus would give him something extra to do, and when he said to Jesus, "What lack I yet?" Jesus accepted his question as an invitation and told him to surrender his wealth and follow him. Jesus knew that the young man was covetous and so treated him according to his need. Jesus saw enough in this young man to yearn after him, to love him, and to desire to secure him as a permanent disciple.

There are two parts to Jesus' reply. First he told the young man to sell and give to the poor, and then he added, "Come, follow me." The first was preparatory to the second, and the second was the primary command. Jesus told him to surrender that which held him back from complete obedience. In his case it was wealth. In our case it may be something else. Whatever hinders and makes impossible our surrender to Jesus must be given up. Jesus did not mean that anyone could win eternal life by accepting poverty. The young man had "too much attachment to wealth and the things which wealth can buy, and he had too little sympathy with the poor. The hard, self-denying life of a follower of Jesus was the bracing that was needed." The young man had asked Jesus for some great thing that he might do. Jesus suggested that great thing to him, and instead of following Jesus he went away sorrowful. The demand was too great. He loved his possessions more than he loved eternal life. He made what Dante called, "the great refusal."

Jesus and Wealth

Matt. 19: 23-26

The attitude of the rich young ruler toward his wealth presented a startling illustration of the power of wealth over the human heart. Jesus took

immediate advantage of the opportunity and spoke strong and difficult words concerning the impossibility of rich men's entering the Kingdom of God. Jesus often used the Jewish method of exaggeration to emphasize his teaching. He spoke for example of straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel. He said, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." No wonder the disciples were surprised and astonished, for there were many rich, and most men seek after wealth. It is easy, however, to understand what Jesus meant. How can a man trust God who trusts in wealth? "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Religion calls for trust, and to put our trust in riches and wealth is to neglect God. Wealth becomes a god to those who trust in it. Jesus, however, did not mean that no rich man could be saved. "Man cannot but God can, break the spell which wealth exercises over the wealthy." Jesus saved Matthew from his wealth, and he saved also Zacchæus. "May we believe that the rich young man was lingering near enough to hear this—that though he could not free himself, yet God might still free him? It is possible that these comments of Christ were partly meant for him. His great mistake had been in supposing that he could with his own power do what was required to gain eternal life." The question each must decide is "Who is my master?" If wealth is our master, then money is our god. When Jesus hung upon the cross his enemies said, "He trusteth on God."

The Christian's Reward

Matt. 19 : 27-30

The words of Jesus suggested Peter's question. God had made it possible for the disciples to leave all that they possessed and become followers of Jesus. "What then shall we have?" Peter, who asked the question, wished to know if he and his fellow disciples were on the road to the Kingdom. Jesus answered the question by saying that inasmuch as they had shared in his privations and hardships they would also share in the glories of the Kingdom. They had been sharers in his work and service in proclaiming the Kingdom and they would also share in the triumph of the King. Jesus told them that they would not be the only sharers in the glory of the Kingdom, for "Every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life."

In the coming Kingdom fitting rewards will be given for service. Many who were first in the world will be last in heaven, and many who were unknown in the world will be first in the Kingdom of heaven. Perhaps Jesus had in mind the rich young ruler who, though one of earth's great ones, had surrendered his place in the Kingdom of God. Perhaps Jesus was thinking of Peter's question and was suggesting that even the apostles themselves must not assume superior place and power, and that there would be many obscure Christians who would equal them in self-sacrifice and loyalty to the Master. "The reward is open to all true workers for Christ without distinction." There is warning in these words against pride and there is encouragement for all obscure but faithful followers of Christ. A perfect illustration of this teaching is found in the parable that follows this lesson. Read carefully Matt. 20 : 1-16.

THE MESSAGE OF THE LESSON

Religion satisfies. The rich young ruler had everything that wealth and position could give, but he was still dissatisfied. He came to Jesus saying, "What lack I yet?"

Anything that prevents us from following Christ should be surrendered. Wealth and pleasure in themselves are not wrong, but when they crowd God out of our life, they become sinful.

Money may become a help or a hindrance. The true position is that of a steward. See Matt. 25 : 14. Dr. F. B. Meyer writes: "I have been credibly informed of one, whose income is ten thousand dollars per annum, but who lives on one thousand dollars, and administers nine thousand dollars for the Lord's service; of another, whose income is forty thousand dollars, but who lives on twelve hundred and fifty dollars and gives away the remainder; of yet another, a governess, who, out of the five hundred dollars that she earns, keeps two hundred and fifty dollars and gives away the other two hundred and fifty dollars; whilst another who earns seventy-five hundred dollars, lives on five hundred dollars, and exercises a wise stewardship over the rest. A friend of my own, who has long since made a comfortable competence, is remaining in business for the purpose of devoting all his profits to the cause of Christ. As surely as some have speaking or writing faculties which they are bound to use for God's service, so others have business faculties which they are equally required to exercise for the same purpose; not wrapping them in the buried napkin to waste."

God's standard is not that of the world. Many whom the world places first God places last. The last of the apostles, Paul, who called himself the chief of sinners, became the first and best leader of the Church.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Why did Jesus leave Galilee?
2. What did Jesus teach about the sacredness of marriage?
3. What blessings does the gospel confer on children?
4. What good qualities had the rich young ruler?
5. Why did he not obey Christ?
6. What does Jesus teach about the right and wrong use of money?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 5. What does the Bible teach about God?

A. The Bible teaches that God is our heavenly Father who made all things and rules over all in wisdom and righteousness and love.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. What is meant by the Perean ministry?
2. What three subjects are treated in ch. 19?
3. Compare the treatment of children in Christian and in non-Christian lands.
4. Why did Jesus "love" the rich young ruler?
5. Why did the rich young ruler refuse the invitation of Jesus?
6. What is the teaching of Jesus concerning money?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 4. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Lesson IV—PROMOTION IN THE KINGDOM

The Golden Text—"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."—Matt. 20 : 28.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 20: 17-28

17 And as Je'sus was going up to Je-ru'sa-lem, he took the twelve disciples apart, and on the way he said unto them,

18 Behold, we go up to Je-ru'sa-lem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to death,

19 And shall deliver him unto the Gen'tiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall be raised up.

20 Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zeb'e-dee with her sons, worshipping *him,* and asking a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom.

22 But Je'sus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say unto him, We are able.

23 He saith unto them My cup indeed ye shall drink: but to sit on my right hand, and on *my* left hand, is not mine to give; but *it is for them* for whom it hath been prepared of my Father.

24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren.

25 But Je'sus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

26 Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister;

27 And whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The Time—A.D. 30. **The Place**—Perea.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, January 17	Selfish Requests Refused	Matt. 20 : 20-28.
Tuesday, January 18	Humble in Prayer	Luke 18 : 9-14.
Wednesday, January 19	Humble in Action	Luke 14 : 7-11.
Thursday, January 20	A Generous Regard for Others	Phil. 2 : 1-11.
Friday, January 21	Sympathy for Others	James 2 : 1-9.
Saturday, January 22	Pure Religion and Service	James 1 : 19-27.
Sunday, January 23	Our Lord Humbled Himself	Isa. 53 : 4-12.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

20. The mother of the sons of Zebedee. Probably a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mark tells us that the suggestion came first from James and John, themselves.

22. To drink the cup. A scriptural phrase used for the portion providentially assigned to a person; especially suffering.

28. A ransom for many. This phrase refers to Christ's atoning death. He took our place. He died for us.

INTRODUCTION

The entire twentieth chapter of Matthew should be read. The parable concerning the householder and the hired laborers is closely connected with the

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THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

last lesson, and should be studied as part of our Lord's reply to Peter's question, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?" Jesus' reply is that the reward is altogether of God's free grace. "Self-sacrifice for Christ, not priority in time, is the ground of preëminence."

Verse 17 of the lesson introduces us to the final journey of Jesus to Jerusalem. For the fourth time he told his disciples that he was to suffer, and now he told them that his death was to be by crucifixion. Our Lord reached Jericho a week before the passover. He probably left Jericho for Bethany on Friday at noon a week before the crucifixion. On Saturday he was at Bethany and the next day was Palm Sunday. The disciples did not understand Jesus' reference to his death, for immediately after the announcement, the request of James and John through their mother was made. They still expected Jesus to establish a kingdom of worldly glory.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

The Laborers in the Vineyard

Matt. 20 : 1-16

As already pointed out this parable is part of Jesus' reply to Peter's question about the reward to be obtained for following Jesus. It will not do to press the details of the parable too closely, but we may say in general that the householder is God; the vineyard, the Kingdom of heaven; the steward, Christ himself; the twelfth hour, the close of the day of opportunity, or the second coming of Christ; and the laborers, the disciples and also all Christians. The penny, which is the reward is, of course, eternal salvation given to all at the end of the day, that is, at the end of life. Jesus may have referred to the mercenary spirit of the Jews who were the first laborers, and their prejudice against the Gentiles. "The Gentile converts went to work without a definite agreement as to price, trusting in the justice and mercy of the Householder." Jesus may also have referred to those who were called first during his ministry, or in early life; and he may have been warning against an envious and boastful disposition.

The hours at which the laborers are called may refer to different periods of Old Testament history, or to the different ages of life. The teaching of the parable is that God does not bargain with men, nor do true believers serve God for reward, but that great love and fidelity find in God the response of kindness and generosity. God alone is Judge of what each should receive. None receives less than what was promised, but some receive more.

THE LESSON STORY

Foretelling the Cross

Matt. 20 : 17, 18

This is the fourth time that Jesus announced his death. Matt. 16 : 21; 17 : 12, 22. He had previously said that he "must" suffer, but now he said that he was going up to Jerusalem to be crucified. Mark, in his Gospel, pictures Jesus as going on, alone, in front of his disciples with his face set, and records the fact that the disciples were amazed and afraid. It was hard for his followers to believe that his ministry was to end in failure and that he himself would suffer. Nevertheless, Jesus told them frankly that this would be the case. He came into the world to die. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." His death was not an accident. Jesus had power to lay his life down and he did so, lovingly and willingly. Jesus went up to Jerusalem to ascend the throne of his Kingdom, and that throne was the cross.

The Ambitious Request

Matt. 20 : 20, 21

Jesus had announced that his death was near, but the disciples did not understand, or would not. James and John, feeling that some great crisis was at hand, wished to secure for themselves foremost places in the coming Kingdom. Matthew tells us that they did not make their request to Jesus them-

selves but through their mother. Their mother was Salome, probably a sister of Mary the mother of Jesus, and they would naturally expect preference to be given to them. Jesus had spoken, ch. 19 : 28, about the disciples sitting upon thrones, judging the tribes of Israel, and doubtless it was this that inspired their selfish request to sit, one on the right and the other on the left in his Kingdom. They wished to secure for themselves the first and second places in the Kingdom of God. It is difficult to understand how James and John could have been so blind, for they had been with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and knew that Jesus' idea of power was different from that commonly held among men.

The Master's Reply

Matt. 20 : 22, 23

Whether the request came from James and John or from their mother, Jesus addressed his answer to the two brothers. They at least had inspired the request. Jesus' answer took the form of a question. Questions arouse thought. He said, "Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" The "cup," of course, refers to the sufferings of our Lord. Jesus suffered in order to reign, and those who sit with him in the place of power must also suffer. This is why Jesus told them that they did not know what they were asking. They thought that they were asking for places of ease and recognition. Jesus said that they were really asking for places of suffering and responsibility. He also told them that they would suffer. James was put to death by Herod, Acts 12 : 2, and John suffered imprisonment, exile, and torture. An old story says that John was given poison and thrown into boiling oil, but without harm. Jesus, however, said that it was not in his power to give the place of honor. That power belonged to God. He seemed to admit that such places of honor will be given. In heaven there will be degrees of glory, but such places are given not arbitrarily, but according to the law of God. God prepares places for those who achieve spiritual triumph through service and suffering. Heaven is not given as a "piece of favoritism." The first place is given to the most worthy. Let us strive, then, not for preferment, but for worthiness. We are all apt to make the mistake of James and John. Our task is to overcome sin, to obtain holiness, to serve and sacrifice. The reward belongs to God.

The Indignant Ten

Matt. 20 : 24-28

The other disciples doubtless expected Jesus to rebuke the worldly ambition of James and John. They were indignant at their attempt to win preferment by private solicitation. Jesus, however, gently rebuked both the brothers and the ten disciples. He gently rebuked the brothers for their rivalry and the ten for their indignation, and laid down the true principles of emulation. He assumed that ambition and the desire to excel were worthy motives, but he distinguished between the world's way and the Christian way of attainment. The world's way is by rivalry, by the display of power. The kings of the world make others serve them, but in the Kingdom of heaven, the King himself is the Servant of all. The primary place is given not to the man who has servants, but to him who serves. "There may be a noble rivalry as to who can most completely devote himself for the benefit of all. And there is no other way of being great or of becoming first. If proof of this is needed, there is the example of the Messiah, himself. On a previous occasion he took a little child as a pattern of temper and spirit; here he takes his own life as a pattern of action. He 'came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' Christ does not here speak of himself as having been sent by his Father to undertake this position of ministering to others, although that would have been true. He says, what is equally true, that he came, of his own free will, to do this. The example is in this way made all the stronger. Although unique among the sons of men, yet he came not to profit by their service but to render service to them, even to the full extreme of giving his life a ransom for them."

AFTER THE LESSON

The Ministering Christ

Matt. 20 : 29-34

As if to illustrate his own message about service, Jesus immediately proceeded to help and heal those in trouble. Matthew tells us that there were two blind men, while Luke and Mark speak of only one, and Mark gives his name as Bartimæus. Jesus was never too busy or too tired to answer the cry of need. The multitude would have silenced the cry of the blind men, but Jesus stood still in the way and called them to him and granted them their request. Jesus is the great Servant. His reward came when, after the healing, the men "followed" him. They identified themselves with Jesus, and it is interesting to think that they were among the people who, on Palm Sunday, joined the triumphal march into the city and sang, "Hosanna to the son of David." Long after Jesus had left the earth and gone back to the glory of his Father's presence, his disciples remembered him as the One who "went about doing good."

THE LESSON MESSAGE

The thought of the entire lesson gathers round the Golden Text. Whatever else you do, learn these words so that you will never forget them. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Lord Wolseley, the great British soldier, once wrote in his journal, "The officers must try to get killed." He meant of course that they should seek the place

of danger and of service. It is the rule by which every true physician lives. He seeks the place of contagion, of sickness, of disease. It is the rule which the missionary follows. He goes out to the far-flung battle line, careless about himself.

"Thy life was given for me,
Thy blood O Lord, was shed,
That I might ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead:
Thy life was given for me;
What have I given for thee?

"Oh, let my life be given,
My years for thee be spent;
World fetters all be riven,
And joy with suffering blent:
Thou gavest thyself for me,
I give myself to thee."

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. How is this lesson related to the preceding lesson?
2. Tell the story of the parable of the Vineyard Laborers.
3. Why did Jesus speak of his death beforehand to his disciples?
4. Why did James and John ask Jesus for the first place?
5. What answer did Jesus make to their request?
6. Why were the ten disciples indignant with James and John, and why did Jesus not uphold their point of view?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 6. Is there more than one God?

A. There is only one God, the living and true God; yet in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Relate this lesson to the last lesson and to the life of Jesus.
2. What purpose had Jesus in telling the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard?
3. On what occasions did Jesus speak of his death?
4. Is ambition wrong?
5. To whom is given the place of honor in the Kingdom of God?
6. What is the chief charm of the character of Jesus?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Lesson V—JESUS GREETED AS KING

The Golden Text—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."—Matt. 21 : 9.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 21: 1-16

For entire lesson, see Matt., ch. 21.

1 And when they drew nigh unto Je-ru'sa-lem, and came unto Beth'pha-ge, unto the mount of Ol'ives, then Je'sus sent two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village that is over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them,* and bring *them* unto me.

3 And if any one say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4 Now this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

5 Tell ye the daughter of Zi'on,
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,
Meek, and riding upon an ass,
And upon a colt the foal of an ass.

6 And the disciples went, and did even as Je'sus appointed them,

7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their garments; and he sat thereon.

8 And the most part of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them in the way.

9 And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of Da'vid: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

10 And when he was come into Je-ru'sa-lem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this?

11 And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Je'sus, from Naz'a-reth of Gal'i-lee.

12 And Je'sus entered into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves;

13 And he saith unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna

to the son of Da'vid; they were moved with indignation,

16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these are saying? And Je'sus saith unto them, Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

The Time—A.D. 30. **The Places**—Bethany and Jerusalem.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, January 24	The Triumphal Entry	Matt. 21 : 1-11.
Tuesday, January 25	The Cleansing of the Temple	Matt. 21 : 12-17.
Wednesday, January 26	Questioning the King	Matt. 21 : 23-32.
Thursday, January 27	The King Rejected	Matt. 21 : 33-43.
Friday, January 28	Jesus Claims to Be King	John 18 : 33-40.
Saturday, January 29	Jesus Crucified as King	John 19 : 13-22.
Sunday, January 30	Sing Praises Unto Our King	Psalm 47.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

1. Drew nigh. From Jericho to Jerusalem, a distance of about twenty miles of hard, uphill traveling. **Bethphage.** "The House of Figs." Perhaps the name of a village or of a district. The rabbis said, "Outside the wall of Jerusalem is Bethphage." **Mount of Olives.** The range of hills facing Jerusalem on the east. It has four summits, and Gethsemane was at the foot of the summit nearest the city.

2. An ass tied, and a colt with her. The two animals are mentioned by Matthew only. The ass was a symbol of peace.

8. Spread their garments. A token of respect paid only to kings and great conquerors. See II Kings 9 : 13.

9. Hosanna. "Glory and honor" to the Son of David. See Ps. 118 : 25, where the word means, "save us now." It was an exclamation of praise.

12. Money-changers. The money changers (1) received the half shekel due from every male, (2) changed foreign money into Jewish currency with which alone the Temple tax could be paid.

INTRODUCTION

With this lesson we begin the last week of our Lord's life. It will be part of our task to relate clearly the events recorded in the Gospels to the days of this eventful week. It is of interest to note that more than one-third of all the Gospel narrative belongs to the record of this last week, usually called Passion Week, or Holy Week. The Gospels everywhere lay emphasis upon the death of Jesus. They represent Jesus as going up to Jerusalem willingly, knowing full well that at the end of the path stood the cross. He chose to die. Knowing that his death would have the effect of disappointing his followers, he deliberately planned what is called "the triumphal entry." Each Gospel tells the story with slight differences. Matthew tells about the two animals. Luke tells of Jesus' weeping over Jerusalem, and John about the palm branches. Saturday, the night before, Jesus had arrived in Bethany and at the supper Mary had anointed him. John 12 : 1-8. Early Sunday morning he entered Jerusalem as a triumphant King, and in the evening returned to the home of his friends in Bethany again.

THE LESSON STORY

Jesus Proclaims Himself a King

Matt. 21 : 1-7

The time had come for Jesus to proclaim himself as King. He had come to establish the Kingdom of God among men. The Baptist had announced his coming, and Jesus himself and his disciples had gone everywhere preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. The people were eager and expectant. They had once tried to force him to declare himself King. John 6 : 15. Jesus, however, had avoided danger and premature death by refusing to allow the people to put him forward. They expected him to be an earthly King, and Jesus could not permit a demonstration in his favor for it would have ended in disappointment and disaster. He was another kind of King. He was King of love, of life, of truth. Now however, that danger was past, the cross was only a week distant, and all the motives which had held Jesus back from display and open avowal of his Messiahship had disappeared. And so Jesus deliberately planned what we may call a pageant. He planned to ride into Jerusalem in royal state and assert his claim. Two of his disciples, one of them probably Peter, went at his request and obtained from an unnamed man, an ass and a colt. Matthew tells us about the ass and the colt. The other evangelists speak of the colt only. The owner may have been a friend of Jesus, but the story carries the impression that Jesus had more than ordinary knowledge and when the disciples found things "even as" Jesus had said, they were impressed.

The Triumphal Entry

Matt. 21 : 8, 9

The triumphal entry furnished another link with Old Testament prophecy. Zechariah, ch. 9 : 9, had long before spoken of such a royal entrance. Jesus rode upon a colt on which no man had ever sat. The ass was a symbol of peace. It was not the entrance

of a conqueror "with chariots and horsemen, but of a king coming to his people with a farewell message of peace." The people were wild with enthusiasm. They put their clothes upon the colt and Jesus sat thereon. They took off their garments and made a carpet in front of him, which was, and is still, a common form of homage in the East. They cut down branches of palm trees and waved them as an expression of joy. The multitude that followed, together with the people who came up out of the city to meet the procession, cried together, "Hosanna to the son of David." It was a glorious spectacle. Its success was due to several things. (1) The crowd that followed Jesus consisted mostly of pilgrims from Galilee, who were still loyal to him. (2) The resurrection of Lazarus was still a subject of discussion and wonder. (3) Jesus' change of policy, which now led him to declare himself openly and to defy the priesthood, found a quick response. (4) It was the time of the Jewish passover, and thousands of people had no prejudices against Jesus.

The People's Question

Matt. 21 : 10, 11

When Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, the whole city was "stirred." The pageant which Jesus had planned had appealed to their imagination. The city was thronged with passover pilgrims from all parts of the world. Their astonishment found expression in the question, "Who is this?" Doubtless the answer came from the Galilæan pilgrims. "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." No more important question has ever been asked. "Who is this?" The answer of the multitude was only partially true. Jesus is more than a prophet. He is a King—the King not only of the Jews, but of all the world. He is not only King, he is also Priest, the Priest who offered himself as sacrifice for the life of the world. Can you say that Jesus is your King, your Saviour, your Teacher, your Lord? He claims to be all this and as such offered himself to the people of Jerusalem. "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." The Jews, however, betrayed him and crucified him. How will you receive and welcome Jesus? This is the question you must answer for yourself.

The Purpose of the Pageant

The triumphal entry had a twofold purpose. (1) It served as an occasion for Jesus to assert openly his claim. Whatever interest attaches to the opinion of others, the opinion of Jesus concerning himself is most important. In the great event he clearly asserted his own royalty and openly presented himself as the King. (2) His interpretation of his kingship is of equal importance. He is the King of peace. He rides upon an ass, the symbol of peace. His scepter is not of gold, but of loving service, and his throne is the cross. Jesus disappointed his followers but later won them again when the true meaning of his sacrifice was interpreted to their hearts by the Holy Spirit. The path to true, kingly power is the pathway of service and sacrifice.

Photograph by the International Film Company

THE GOLDEN GATE

This gate has been walled up since the time of the Crusaders, but was thrown open once a year, on Palm Sunday, in celebration of our Lord's triumphal entry which is supposed to have been through it.

"Thou art the King of Israel,
Thou David's royal Son,
Who in the Lord's name cometh,
The King and blessed One."

The Cleansing of the Temple

Matt. 21 : 12-16

Jesus entered Jerusalem and, after looking around about him, returned again to the quiet and seclusion either of Bethany or the Garden of Gethsemane. Nothing happened, and doubtless the multitude was disappointed. The next day was Monday, and in the morning he again entered the Holy City. On his way thither he cursed the barren fig tree that

had leaves but no fruit. A fig tree has figs before the leaves come. "This, the only miracle of wrath worked by Jesus, is also a revelation of God's mercy, for whereas the countless miracles of mercy were all wrought upon men, this miracle was wrought upon a tree. The one fig tree, standing apart from all other trees, is the Jewish nation, and whereas it alone had leaves, while the other trees were bare, it signifies that whereas Israel made great professions of righteousness and of the service of God, the other nations of the earth made none. Both Jew and Gentile were, indeed, equally unfruitful, but the Jew added to his unfruitfulness the appearance of fruit, for it is the peculiarity of the fig tree that its fruit appears and is well developed before there is any sign of leaves. When, therefore, leaves appear on a fig tree, ripe fruit may justly be expected. The fault of the fig tree, therefore, was not that it had no fruit, which was not to be expected at that season, but that it pretended to have it, and had not."

On entering the city Jesus went to the Temple and there the second time during his public ministry, he "cleansed" the house of God. The first cleansing of the Temple is recorded in John 2: 13-16. The story of the children (the Greek calls them "boys"), singing in the Temple is singularly beautiful. They were repeating the hosannas of the triumphal entry. The Pharisees were more indignant at the singing of the children in the Temple than they were at the abuses that were practiced there. Jesus, however, did not argue. He censored and condemned.

AFTER THE LESSON

Tuesday of Passion Week

Matt. 21 : 17-46

After Jesus had cleansed the Temple, he passed out of the city and returned again at the close of the day to Bethany. The next morning, Tuesday, he returned to Jerusalem. On the way the disciples pointed out that the fig tree against which the curse was pronounced had died, and Jesus used the incident to inspire faith in God. The day was a day of strenuous conflict and argument and was crowded with activity. The chief priests challenged the right of Jesus to act and teach as he was doing and asked him for the source of his authority. Jesus answered them indirectly in three parables of judgment. The first, the parable of the Two Sons, Matt. 21 : 28-32, represents the Pharisees as promising and then withdrawing. On the other hand the publicans and sinners were like the second son who first refused and then obeyed. The second parable, Matt. 21 : 33-46, about The Wicked Husbandman, answered the Pharisees' question about Jesus' right to act and speak. Jesus claimed that the Father had sent him and that the leaders of the nation would put him to death even as they had the prophets of the past whom God had sent. Nevertheless, judgment would fall upon the nation because of its crime, and the kingdom would be taken from Israel and given to another nation. The words of judgment uttered by Jesus are terrible. The Pharisees understood that Jesus referred to them and they sought to arrest him but feared the people. The third parable concerning the Marriage Feast, Matt. 22 : 1-14, belongs to the next week's lesson.

THE MESSAGE OF WARNING

The entire chapter gives us a marvelous picture of how the gracious invitations of the Gospel mingle with the judgments of God. Jesus came to Jerusalem amid the hosannas of the multitude, offering himself to them as the King of peace, the Saviour Lord, but they turned from him and denied him. A new note was now heard in the language of Jesus. It is the note of judgment, of warning, of terrible doom. He, who was to be the chief Corner Stone, will fall upon the impenitent, and shall scatter them as dust. Mercy that is refused passes into judgment.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. What is meant by "Passion Week" or "Holy Week"?
2. Why did Jesus purposely plan the triumphal entry?
3. Account for the enthusiasm of the people at the triumphal entry.
4. Why did Jesus curse the barren fig tree?
5. What three parables of warning did Jesus speak?
6. Why did Jesus begin to speak parables of judgment?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 7. What does the Bible teach about God's will for us?

A. The Bible teaches that it is God's will for us that we love him with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind; and that we love others as ourselves.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Give the events which happened on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday of Holy Week.
2. Why is so much emphasis placed upon the last week of Jesus' life.
3. What purpose had Jesus in view when he planned the triumphal entry?
4. Do you think the triumphal entry was a success or a failure?
5. What is meant by "Parables of Judgment"? Why did Jesus speak such parables?
6. Why did not Jesus try to conciliate instead of oppose the Jewish leaders?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST

(May be used with Missionary Applications)

The Golden Text—"Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in."—Luke 14 : 23.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 22: 1-14

1 And Je'sus answered and spake again in parables unto them, saying,

2 The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son,

3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come.

4 Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have made ready my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast.

5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise;

6 And the rest laid hold on his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them.

7 But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast.

10 And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests.

11 But when the king came in to behold the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding-garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few chosen.

The Time—A.D. 30. **The Place**—Jerusalem.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, January 31	The Marriage Feast	Matt. 22 : 1-14.
Tuesday, February 1	The Missionary Message	Matt. 28 : 16-20.
Wednesday, February 2	Jesus Chooses His Missionaries	Matt. 10 : 1-10.
Thursday, February 3	Jesus Instructs His Missionaries	Matt. 10 : 16-23.
Friday, February 4	A Church Sends Out Missionaries	Acts 13 : 1-7.
Saturday, February 5	An Old Missionary Call	Isa., ch. 55.
Sunday, February 6	Missionary Zeal	Isa. 61 : 10 to 62 : 5.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

1. And Jesus answered. The Jews had sought to seize him, and this parable is Jesus' answer to their attitude toward him.

2. A marriage. A marriage feast lasted seven, often fourteen days. The marriage in the parable refers to the union of Christ with his people, the Church.

3. His servants. Moses and the prophets were first sent to the Jewish people, who rejected the invitation. Later the apostles were sent also to the Jews, and then later to the Gentiles.

6. The rest. The chief priests and Pharisees who became the chief opponents of the Christian Church.

11. Wedding-garment. The Eastern custom required a special festive robe. The robe of course is the garment of a holy life.

INTRODUCTION

The lesson of last week is continued in this lesson. The time is Tuesday of Holy Week. Jesus is only three days from Calvary. Recall the events of this crucial week. Sunday the triumphal entry took place; Monday he cleansed the Temple; Tuesday he entered the Temple, and entered into controversy with the chief priests and Pharisees, who sought opportunity to destroy him. In last week's lesson we were introduced to that controversy and studied two of the parables spoken at that time—the parable of the Two Sons, and that of the Wicked Husbandman. The lesson this week is a third parable spoken in defense of Jesus' own position and as a judgment upon his enemies. This parable is told only by Matthew, and must not be confused with the parable of the Great Supper as told in Luke 14 : 16-24. The parable in Luke from which the golden text is taken, should, however, be carefully read and compared with this parable which is usually called "The Marriage of the King's Son."

THE LESSON STORY

The Marriage Feast

Matt. 22 : 1-3

The story which Jesus told to rebuke and warn the priests and the Pharisees is interesting and very real. The son of an Eastern king was to be married, and in his honor the king prepared a truly royal wedding feast. Great preparations were made and long before the banquet was spread the royal invitations were sent out. The invitations had long been in the hands of those invited, and then on the

morning of the wedding feast the servants were sent to "call them that were bidden." However they refused the call. They rejected the invitation —the invitation of their king. The hearers of Jesus would quickly understand what the parable meant. All through the Old Testament the relation of the Jewish nation to God is spoken of as a marriage. God, too, was their King. The coming of Christ, the Son of God, the King's Son, had been spoken of in the Old Testament. Jesus asserted that in him the gospel feast was now spread, and to this feast the Jews were invited. Every priest and prophet of the past had pointed to him, and now that all things were ready the Jews were called to the feast, but they bluntly refused. Jesus had sent forth his disciples preaching the Kingdom of God, but the Jews refused and would not come. Read again the lament of Jesus as he looked upon Jerusalem. Luke 19 : 41, 42.

The Repeated Invitation

Matt. 22 : 4-7

The repetition of an invitation was a Jewish custom. The rabbi said: "What was the boast of the men of Jerusalem? Not one of them went to a banquet unless he were twice invited." The king who had prepared the feast, lest some mistake had hindered the acceptance of the invitation, sent other servants, thinking that where the first servants had failed others might succeed, but the second band of messengers fared worse than the first. They were not only ignored, and their message made light of, but they were shamefully mistreated and murdered. The king of course could no longer tolerate such ingratitude and disloyalty and sent his soldiers to destroy the murderers and burn their city.

It is of course easier for us to understand what Jesus meant than it would have been for those who heard him. Jesus was speaking words of exact prophecy. After Pentecost the disciples went everywhere preaching the gospel and inviting the Jews to come; they not only turned their backs upon the message, but persecuted and killed many of the messengers. We think of the persecution which Paul encountered and the martyrdom of Stephen and James. Then came "the armies of the Romans who under Vespasian and Titus slew these murderers and burned their city, Jerusalem."

The destruction of Jerusalem happened in A.D. 70, and since that time the Jewish people have been scattered over the world with no country to call their own.

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A MODERN MARRIAGE SCENE IN PALESTINE

The Wedding Guests

Matt. 22 : 8-10

The king in the parable, however, was not to be denied guests. The marriage feast was ready. If the invited guests were unworthy as well as unwilling, then other guests must be invited. So, the servants of the king went out into the broad highways that led up out of the surrounding country into the city, and, whomever they found, bad and good alike, they gathered them in to the banquet until the royal hall was filled. The people gathered out from the highway, the people hitherto uninvited, were of course the Gentiles or perhaps the Jewish outcasts. If the Jews or the priestly caste would not come, the Gentiles and the outcasts would. In one of his sermons Paul said: "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

The gospel feast once spread before the eyes of the Jewish nation and spurned, has now been thrown open to the world. Jesus' last message was, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The gospel is for all the world, and this gospel invitation is world-wide. If the Jews reject it, the Gentiles will ac-

cept it. The principle is also true to-day. If America will not come to Christ, perhaps Africa will, or India, or China.

The Wedding Garment

Matt. 22 : 11-14

When the guests were all placed in the royal banquet hall the king himself came to welcome them and to bid them rejoice together. The invited guests were apparently provided with suitable festal garments, perhaps by the king himself. This was an Eastern custom and neglect might cost a guest his life. Dr. Taylor tells of a traveler who was invited, with the ambassadors he accompanied, to the table of the Persian king. "We were told by the officer, that we, according to their usage, must hang the splendid vests that were sent us from the king, over our dresses, and so appear in his presence. The ambassadors at first refused; but the officer urged it so earnestly, alleging, as also did others, that the omission would greatly displease the king, since all other envoys observed such a custom, that at last they consented, and hung, as we did, the splendid vests over their shoulders."

When the king came into the banquet hall he observed one guest who had on no wedding garment and who, when asked the reason, could give none. Then the king ordered him bound hand and foot and cast out into the night.

Jesus in the parable teaches that even the Gentile guests, those invited from the world's highway, must pass in judgment before God. A very old writer says: "The entrance to the marriage feast is without scrutiny, for by grace alone were we all called, both good and bad. But the subsequent life of those who have entered in, will not be without scrutiny, but the King will make a most exact scrutiny of those who after their entry into the faith, shall be found with filthy garments. Let us therefore tremble, reflecting that unless a man live a pure life, faith by itself is of no avail, for not only is he cast out of the marriage feast, but is cast into the fire."

The wedding garment is a holy life, and without holiness no man can see God. The great burden of our life is to live pure and blameless. We cannot enjoy the gospel of Christ without purity.

"The pure in heart . . . shall see God." "The garment, therefore, is a character consistent with the acceptance—simple, sincere, and loyal—of the gospel of Christ. There is no true acceptance of the gospel where there is no beginning of holiness, and no growth in likeness to God himself; as Paul has said, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?' It is one thing to profess to accept Christianity; it is another thing to accept it in reality. It is one thing to say that you are a Christian, and another to be a Christian indeed. It is one thing to be called, and another thing to respond to that call whole-heartedly, and in its entirety, so as to make manifest that we are 'called and chosen and faithful.' "

THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE

The parable presents to us in clear and unmistakable terms the missionary appeal. The gospel is like a feast spread before the eyes of a hungry world. It is a feast for heart and mind and soul. Jesus is the Bread of life, of which if a man eat he will never hunger. The invitation is from God himself. He bids us come. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The gospel invitation is for everyone, both good and bad. The wedding garment will be given to all who come. People of all ranks, of all ages, of all nations, are welcome at the royal banquet, and the only requirement is the willingness to obey the command that bids us come. We must remember, too, that the invitation that is spurned or even neglected turns to judgment and tragic condemnation. The Jews who rejected Jesus rejected also the light, and chose darkness instead. To-day the Kingdom of heaven is open to all the world. It calls to a wedding festival. It offers the wedding garment, and whosoever will may come. A copy of the New Testament was picked up on a battle field of the British Boer War in South Africa by a British officer. It was bound in the untanned skin of some wild beast and printed in one of the dialect tongues of Africa. The pages are all clear except one and that one page is dim with much fingering. It is the page that has the great gospel message, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." The "whosoever will" is still the burden of the gospel invitation to the gospel feast.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Show the relation of this parable to the lesson of last week.
2. Why is the Kingdom of God like a marriage feast?
3. Who are the servants who invite the guests?
4. Who are the invited guests?
5. What is the wedding garment?
6. What was Jesus' purpose in telling this parable?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 8. What is sin?

A. Sin is disobeying God or coming short of what he would have us be and do.

Q. 9. How does God look upon sin?

A. God looks upon sin with holy displeasure and great sorrow; and calls upon everyone to repent, warning us of the consequences of sin.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Point out the difference between this parable and the parable of the Great Supper in Luke 14 : 16-24.

2. What purpose did Jesus accomplish by telling this parable?
3. What is meant by "the king," "the servant," "the feast," "the wedding garment"?
4. What missionary motives are contained in the parable?
5. How was this parable fulfilled in the history of the Jews?
6. What application can be made of the teaching of this parable to the citizens of America of this generation?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 8. How doth God execute his decrees?
A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Lesson VII—LESSONS ON CITIZENSHIP

(May be used with Temperance Applications)

The Golden Text—"And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."—Matt. 22 : 37-39.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 22: 15-22, 34-40

For entire lesson, see Deut. 8 : 6-11; Matt. 22 : 15-22, 34-40.

15 Then went the Phar'i-sees, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in *his* talk.

16 And they send to him their disciples, with the He-ro'dians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men.

17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæ'sar, or not?

18 But Je'sus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites?

19 Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a denarius.

20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

21 They say unto him, Cæ'sar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæ'sar the things that are Cæ'sar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

22 And when they heard it, they marvelled, and left him, and went away.

* * * * *

34 But the Phar'i-sees, when they heard that he had put the Sad'du-cees to silence, gathered themselves together.

35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him:

36 Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

39 And a second like *unto it* is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

40 On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.

The Time—A.D. 30. **The Place**—Jerusalem.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, February 7	A Citizen's Duty	Matt. 22 : 15-22.
Tuesday, February 8	Gratitude to God	Deut. 8 : 6-11.
Wednesday, February 9	Citizens of Heaven	Phil. 3 : 17-21.
Thursday, February 10	A Citizen Law-Abiding	Rom. 13 : 1-10.
Friday, February 11	Our Reasonable Service	Rom. 12 : 1-9.
Saturday, February 12	Character of a Good Citizen	Rom. 12 : 10-21.
Sunday, February 13	Love, the Greatest Thing in the World	I Cor., ch. 13.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

16. The Herodians. Those who were in sympathy with Herod and the Roman rule.

17. Is it lawful? The Zealot party held that since God was the rightful King of the Jews, it was wrong to pay tribute to any foreign power.

19. A denarius. A Roman coin worth between fifteen and seventeen cents. The Jewish school held that "he whose coin was in circulation was king." The rabbis objected to human figures on coins as being of the nature of idolatry.

34. Sadducees. They were in sympathy with Roman rule. They were worldly at heart and skeptical.

35. Trying him. The question is put by a learned scribe or rabbi, here called a lawyer, in

order to test Jesus' knowledge of the Jewish Law by asking him to solve a hard and often-disputed question.

INTRODUCTION

The lesson continues the story of what happened on Tuesday of Holy Week. The Jews had questioned Jesus' authority when he cleansed the Temple and Jesus had replied to them in the parables which we have studied in the two preceding lessons. Jesus had silenced the Pharisees but not satisfied them. He had only aroused their anger and they "sought to lay hold on him." In this search to find a way to silence and to destroy Jesus the Jewish leaders were tireless. In this lesson we find Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians combining to trap him. The Pharisees and Sadducees were enemies. The Pharisees and Herodians were also enemies, but all three parties united to entangle Jesus in order to discredit him before the people and thus to encompass his ruin. The lesson introduces us therefore to a wonderful controversy. Tuesday of Holy Week has been called "The Day of Questions." We have in this lesson four great questions. First, we have the question of the Herodians about the tribute money. Second, we have the question of the Sadducees about the resurrection. Third, there is the question of the Pharisees about the chief Commandment, and fourth, the unanswerable question of Jesus himself concerning himself. Jesus not only answered all questions put to him so wisely, but himself asked such an unanswerable question that his opponents did not dare to ask him any more questions. He had proved himself in every way to be their intellectual superior.

THE LESSON STORY

The Question of the Herodians

Matt. 22 : 15-22

The Herodians were a political party which was favorable to Roman rule. The Pharisees, on the other hand, thought that no true Jew could pay tribute to a foreign power. The Herodians were loyal to Rome and to Herod, and they expected to lead Jesus into some disloyal utterance. During his later ministry, Jesus had avoided Herod's dominions. The question was of course serious, yet it was not asked honestly, but with the intention of entangling Jesus. The Herodians were, however, disappointed. Jesus asked to be shown a "denarius," a Roman coin with the emperor's face stamped upon it. "The coin represented Roman organization, security of person and property, facilities of transit, and other beneficent elements of stable government." Was it just to accept all these advantages and then refuse to pay for their maintenance? To pay tribute to Rome was to give back value for value received. It was a moral obligation. It was the payment of a debt. It was a patriotic duty. The Herodians would have been satisfied had he said no more, but Jesus not only said that Cæsar must be paid but that God also must be paid. In this answer Jesus laid down a far-reaching political and religious principle. He asserted the duty of supporting the civil authority. He also set boundaries to civil authority. If the State legislates against conscience, then the conscience is not bound. He asserted also the right of the Church as well as the right of the State. Each has its own power and its own province. The State has no authority to enforce any religious belief, and religion has no right to use the State in its behalf. Jesus will not be entangled in the politics of any party. He will not give his allegiance to any party. Parties must give their allegiance to him. When the Herodians heard Jesus' answer to their question "they marvelled, and left him, and went away."

The Question of the Sadducees

Matt. 22 : 23-33

The Sadducees were the avowed enemies of the Pharisees. They were skeptical and worldly, and although they accepted the books of Moses as their Scriptures, they denied the existence of spirit, and denied the resurrection. The question they propounded to Jesus, though not a part of our lesson, is interesting. It was about a woman who was seven times married. They wished to know what relation she would have to her seven husbands in the other life. Jesus told them that only ignorance could ask such a question, for in heaven there is no such thing as marriage, for the redeemed are "as angels in heaven." Jesus did not try to answer their foolish question, but taught them a few simple truths about the immortal life, to the effect that the Kingdom of God is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The Sadducees denied that there was any teaching about the life after death in the books of Moses, and Jesus took a text out of their own Scriptures and showed them that even there, the immortal life is openly asserted. "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Jesus in effect said that those who had died were still alive, and that God was still their God. "Only living beings can have a God." It came as a surprise both to Pharisees and to Sadducees, who had agreed that there was nothing in the books of Moses to prove the doctrine of the future life, to have Jesus point out this unanswerable text which silenced them and convicted them of not knowing their own Scriptures. No wonder the multitude were astonished at his teaching. Jesus knew the Scriptures because he loved them and the Spirit that breathed through them, lived in him.

The Question of the Pharisees

Matt. 22 : 34-40

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Herodians and the Sadducees, they took counsel together and put forward a leading scribe, called

in the lesson a "lawyer," to ask him a test question. The words of the question, "Which is the great commandment in the law," do not give the exact meaning of the question which the scribe asked. The question asked was, "What kind of commandment is great in the Law?" He was asking what class of commandments have the first rank, what sort of qualities must a commandment have to give it the first place. There were many laws, and one law differed from another. The scribe was asking for the principle which ought to guide one in making distinctions between laws and commandments. Jesus immediately answered that "love" is the guiding principle. Jesus referred to the commandment which every Jew recited twice a day and which is found in the book of Deuteronomy, ch. 6 : 5. "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." This principle of love, Jesus said, is universal, and applies also to one's neighbor, for side by side with love to God must be placed love to man. The margin of the Revised Version in v. 39 reads, "And a second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This love is not a mere sentiment but an active force. It is a love which takes all one's intellectual and spiritual powers to express. These two laws sum up not only all the Law but also all that the Prophets have taught. If anyone wishes to know what value is to be placed upon any law, or commandment, or religious rule, let him test it by this all-embracing and all-redeeming principle of love which Jesus gave. Love is the greatest thing in the world.

AFTER THE LESSON

The Question of Jesus

Matt. 22 : 41-46

Jesus had silenced his questioners and they were standing in groups discussing his answers and trying to determine what to do next. While they were still "gathered together," Jesus asked them a question. It was a Bible question. It is stated that the Messiah is the Son of David (see Matt. 20 : 31; 21 : 15) and yet in Psalm 110 David calls the Messiah, "Lord." Jesus asked how it is possible for David to call his son, his "Lord." "If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?" Jesus used the word "the Christ," meaning "the Messiah," and every Jew believed that Psalm 110 was speaking of the Messiah. The Jews were not able to answer the question of Jesus, because they were not willing to admit that Jesus was the Messiah and therefore not only David's Lord, but the Lord of heaven and earth. Jesus asserted that the Messiah is not only Son of David but Lord. It is a revelation of what Jesus thought about himself. He claimed not only to be "the Son of David," to whom the hosannas in the Temple were directed but the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus had silenced his critics and from that day forth no man dared ask him any more questions. He was victorious not only in life but in intellect, and proved himself superior to those who thought that they could convict him of lack of knowledge. It is a new experience in our study of the life of Jesus. He not only gave God all his strength and soul, he gave God also his mind. All other questions are answered when we can answer Christ's last testing question, "What think ye of the Christ?" Can you say, "He is my Lord"? All other questions receive their right answer as we understand him and until we have answered this question of Jesus no other questions are worth while. One of our truest poets said, when asked about some of the great questions which are troubling our age: "I believe that Jesus of Nazareth, is the Father, the Saviour of the human race. In his principles of justice, his principles of love and brotherhood, we find the solution of all these questions."

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Relate this lesson to the events which occurred during Holy Week.
2. What three classes of people united to entangle Jesus?
3. How did Jesus answer the Herodians?
4. What is Jesus' argument in v. 32?
5. Why is it that love is the first and chief commandment?
6. Explain Jesus' argument in vs. 41-45.

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 10. What are the consequences of sin?

A. The consequences of sin are estrangement from God, increasing sinfulness in ourselves, injury to others, and the righteous judgments of God in time and in eternity.

Q. 11. How has God provided for our salvation from sin?

A. God, of his great mercy, has provided for our salvation from sin by the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Is it proper to speak of the intellectual supremacy of Jesus?
2. What is Christ's teaching concerning the relation of the Church and the State?
3. Upon what does Jesus base his belief in immortality?
4. Upon what principle does Jesus classify the Commandments?
5. How shall we estimate the place of Christ in life?
6. How does our attitude toward Jesus answer all other questions?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 9. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH VIRGINS

The Golden Text—"Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."—Matt. 25 : 13.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 25: 1-13

1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

3 For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them:

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6 But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13 Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.

The Time—A.D. 30—Tuesday of Holy Week. **The Place**—Jerusalem.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, February 14	The Wise and the Foolish Virgins	Matt. 25 : 1-13.
Tuesday, February 15	By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them	Matt. 7 : 15-23.
Wednesday, February 16	Ready and Watching	Mark 13 : 28-37.
Thursday, February 17	Watch Without Being Anxious	Luke 12 : 22-31.
Friday, February 18	Watch Without Ceasing	Luke 12 : 32-40.
Saturday, February 19	Faithful While Watching	Luke 12 : 41-48.
Sunday, February 20	Seek Ye the Lord	Isa. 55 : 1-9.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

1. Then. This is a favorite word with Matthew. Here it means the time of Christ's glorious coming. **Ten virgins.** Those desirous of entering the Kingdom. They represent Christians who hope to enter into life eternal. "Ten" signifies completeness. **The bridegroom.** The Bridegroom is Christ. The place naturally taken by the bride is here taken by the ten virgins.

3. Lamps. Torches. The lamps are the outward marks of the Christian life. The oil is the inward spiritual life which imparts the outward evidence of religion.

5. Tarried. The wedding took place at night. The return of the bridegroom from the home of the bride is long delayed. A suggestion that Christ's coming will call for patient waiting.

10. The door was shut. The door of heaven. The opportunity to enter had passed. They were not ready.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

The time of the lesson is still Tuesday of Passion Week. The leaders of the Jews had determined to destroy Jesus, and he openly denounced and exposed them. Between this lesson and the lesson of last week, three chapters intervene which contain marvelous disclosures of Jesus, concerning his Second Coming. Chapter 23 contains "Seven Woes" pronounced against the Pharisees, ending with words of judgment upon the nation. Chapters 24 and 25 contain his discourse upon the last things. Scholars have found in these two chapters seven sections. Matthew was fond of selecting groups of seven. In ch. 13 there are seven parables. In ch. 23 there are seven woes. In chs. 24, 25 we can discover seven separate discourses dealing with the events connected with his coming again. Jesus often spoke of his "second coming." Sometimes he referred to his coming after his resurrection, sometimes to his coming after the ascension, sometimes to Christians at their death, sometimes to his coming in great historical events and frequently to his coming a second time in glory. Read these two chapters and discover the beauty and mystery of Jesus' words. All through these chapters, Jesus repeats two thoughts. "Be watchful," "Be faithful." See ch. 24 : 42, 44. The present lesson illustrates the warning, "Be watchful," and the lesson next week, the warning, "Be faithful."

INTRODUCTION

The parable of the Ten Virgins is one of the most familiar parables in the New Testament. The wedding takes place at night, as do all Oriental weddings. The bridegroom with his friends go to the home of the bride to fetch her to his home. On the return journey the ten virgins, the friends of the bride, are supposed to join the procession and to enter with the bridal party into the bridegroom's house, where the wedding feast is to be held. The

return of the bridegroom is long delayed. The waiting virgins fall into a sleep from which they are awakened by the cry, "Behold, the bridegroom!" Because of the long delay the oil in the torches had been exhausted and the five foolish virgins, unable to secure additional oil from those who had provided themselves with an extra supply, went off to buy some. During their absence, the bridal party came, the door was shut, and the "foolish virgins" were too late. It is a simple and beautiful story and it is worth while to discover its deeper meaning.

The Bridegroom

The Bridegroom is Christ himself. Early in his ministry he spoke of John the Baptist as the "friend of the bridegroom." Jesus is coming again. He is coming to claim all true Christians as his own. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." In the New Testament, the Church is called the bride of Christ. In the parables the thought is transferred from the bride to the virgins in order to point out the difference between faithful and careless Christians.

H. O Tanner

"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH!"

The Ten Virgins

The number ten is used because to the Jews it meant completeness. Ten persons made a congregation. The ten virgins represent, therefore, the entire body of Christians, but Jesus did not mean to suggest that half are wise and half foolish. Jesus never said anything about the proportion of the lost and the saved. The ten virgins represent professing Christians who openly and before the world profess friendship for Christ. They represent the rank and file of Christians who make an effort to practice their Christian faith. The "lamps" or torches were the symbols of their profession, and suggest the outward marks by which Christians are recognized and known.

The Wise and the Foolish

The ten virgins had much in common, as all professing Christians have. They were all friends of the bridegroom and the bride. They all sought to welcome them and to add to their pleasure. They were all furnished with lamps. They all waited in the night for the bridal procession. They all "slumbered and slept," for the religious life is not an abnormal, unnatural life. There was only one thing in which the five "wise" differed from the five "foolish." The "wise" had provided themselves with an extra supply of oil. The "foolish" had no oil to replenish their already exhausted supply. If the lamps in the parable refer to the outward evidences of the Christian life, the oil is then "the inward spiritual power which imparts light, warmth, and value to the externals of religion." Christian rules of life, public worship, fasting, and works of mercy are good, but only on condition that they spring from, and are nourished by the Christian spirit. Christians must have within them the source of light. "Otherwise they are as useless as lamps without oil, a burden to ourselves and misleading to others, who naturally believe that so much external profession implies what, as a matter of fact, is not there; and who are likely to be made to stumble when they discover that it is not there. They have trusted to persons who carried lamps, and who therefore might be expected to be made to help in times of darkness, but who prove to be quite unable to do so, for they themselves are utterly in the dark. The inner life of constant communion with the Spirit of God is the oil which alone can illuminate and render beneficial to ourselves and to others the religious activity which we manifest in our daily life."

The Foolish Virgins

The five "foolish" thought the waiting would soon be over and were unprepared for the long delay. The Christian life is not a honeymoon only. It calls for service and sacrifice and unless the heart is fed with the life of God, there is soon darkness and defeat. Outward religion will not suffice us in the day when Christ comes. The "foolish" virgins sought to replenish their dying lamps from the oil provided for themselves by the "wise." But that

was impossible. "It is impossible for one person to impart to another the spiritual power which comes from frequent communion with God's Spirit. That only can come from the man's own experience of such communion, an experience which requires much time. 'Give us of your oil' is a request which no religious person can grant; he can only teach how the oil is to be obtained. It must be bought by personal experience."

The Shut Door

When the foolish virgins returned "the door was shut." They were too late. We are not told whether they succeeded in buying oil. The last we see of them they are standing outside at the closed door. Concerning the wise it is said, "They that were ready went in." Concerning the foolish it is written, "The door was shut." The closed door meant security and peace and blessing to those who had entered, but to those who stood out in the night it meant loss and banishment and irreparable distress. The mere wish to enter is not enough. Nothing can be done for one who has no preparation of heart. "All through the long delay there had been continued indifference about providing what was absolutely indispensable."

THE LESSON OF THE PARABLE

It is wise to remember that each parable has one distinct lesson. The lesson of the parable of the Ten Virgins is given in v. 13, "Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour." God opens for us the door of opportunity and it is shut by our neglect, our indifference, or our refusal. "The Spirit of God will not always strive with man." If we would be ready to enter the open door, let us see to it that the supply of oil is large and that our inner life is right with God.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Locate this parable in the life of Jesus.
2. Give an account of the teaching of Jesus on Tuesday of Holy Week.
3. Why did Jesus speak the parable of the Ten Virgins?
4. How did the five wise virgins differ from the five foolish virgins?
5. In what did they agree?
6. Explain "the bridegroom," "the virgins," "the lamps," "the oil," "the door."

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 12. Who is Jesus Christ?

A. Jesus Christ is God's eternal and only-begotten Son who humbled himself to become man, and so is God and man.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Show the connection between this lesson and the last lesson.
2. If a parable has only one principal message, what is the message of the parable of the Ten Virgins?
3. Why could not the five wise virgins give of their oil to the five foolish virgins?
4. What does "oil" represent in the teaching of Jesus?
5. Explain the religious significance of the words, "the bridegroom cometh."
6. Why is it impossible to open the door to those who come too late?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 10. How did God create man?

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Lesson IX—REWARDS OF FAITHFULNESS

The Golden Text—"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things."—Matt. 25 : 23.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 25: 14-30

14 For *it is* as *when* a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey.

16 Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents.

17 In like manner he also that *received* the two gained other two.

18 But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them.

20 And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22 And he also that *received* the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter;

25 And I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own.

26 But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter;

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest.

28 Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.

30 And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

The Time—A.D. 30. **The Place**—Jerusalem.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, February 21	Rewards of Faithfulness	Matt. 25 : 14-23.
Tuesday, February 22	A Citizen Responsible	Matt. 25 : 24-30.
Wednesday, February 23	Faithful in Service	Matt. 25 : 31-40.
Thursday, February 24	Neglect in Service	Matt. 25 : 41-46.
Friday, February 25	Faithful Workers Rewarded	Luke 2 : 8-17.
Saturday, February 26	A Faithful Officer Rewarded	Neh. 2 : 1-8.
Sunday, February 27	Reward of Faithful Prayer	Ps. 40 : 1-8.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

15. Talents. The Greek or Roman silver talent was worth about $1180. Thus even one talent was a great trust. The "talents" of course represent all the good gifts of God to men.

16. Traded. Christians "trade" with their talents, when they use that which God has given them for the benefit of others. **Straightway.** The man with the five talents began his service without delay.

19. After a long time. Jesus here suggested that his Second Coming will be long delayed. The early Christians thought that Jesus would come in their day.

27. To the bankers. The bank would have been a safer place than a hole in the ground, and it would have brought "interest." In the spiritual life "the bankers" may refer to strong spiritual persons who help and quicken the religious life.

30. Outer darkness. Notice how often Jesus in these last parables suggested the tragedy and the doom that follow neglect and indifference.

INTRODUCTION

This lesson, like the lesson of last week, belongs to Tuesday of Passion Week. The parable of the Ten Virgins teaches that Christians must be watchful and wise, the parable of the Talents that they must be faithful. This parable must not be confused with the parable of the Pounds as recorded in Luke 19 : 11-28. In the parable of the Pounds the servants all have the same gifts. The parable of the Talents is one of the most timely of all the parables for our age. Dr. William Taylor beautifully interprets it. "The master is the Lord Jesus Christ. The servants are, in the first instance, the Twelve to whom the parable was originally addressed; but, in a broader sense, the members of the visible Church. The talents are primarily, perhaps, the gifts received for his followers, and dispensed to them, by the ascended Christ; but we may view them in a more extended light as the opportunities of service which Christ has given to all who come into contact with his word. The going away of the lord into a far country is the withdrawal of Christ as a visible presence from the earth; and the return of the lord, 'after a long time,' is the Second Coming of Christ, when the final reckoning of judgment shall he held. The trading of the servants with the talents is the faithful use made by his professed disciples, of the opportunities of service which Christ has given them; while the treatment of the servants by their master on his return sets before us the principles on which the awards of the Judge of all the earth shall ultimately be made."

THE LESSON STORY

The Intrusted Talents

Matt. 25 : 14, 15

A man of wealth and distinction, a nobleman, perhaps, or a king, on leaving his home for a long journey in a foreign land, gave his property to his servants, or slaves to hold in trust during his absence. He gave five talents, over five thousand dollars to one, two talents to a second, and one talent to a third. It is clearly stated that he gave to each according to his ability, expecting him not only to keep the money safe, but to use it to advantage.

In the Kingdom of God, men of varying abilities are given corresponding responsibilities. The gifts which God gives to men are the opportunities for service. God is unseen and seems to leave the world to be cared for by his servants. All men are not equal in ability nor in opportunity, but all may be equally faithful in the discharge of duty, great or small.

The Absent Lord

Matt. 25 : 16-19

As soon as the servants were left alone their

characters were revealed. The man with the five talents immediately began to "trade" with his property, and soon doubled his capital. In like manner the man with two talents "gained other two," but the man with only one talent, fearing lest he should lose that which was given to him, hid it away in the earth in order to keep it safely. The parable states that the owner was absent for a long while, but one day he returned and demanded a reckoning. We, too, hold what we have in trust. We are trustees for God and some day he will demand a reckoning. In another parable, the parable of the Pounds, Luke 19 : 11-28, the command to the servants is "Trade ye herewith till I come." In ancient times slaves carried on trade, kept shops, and paid their masters a certain percentage of the profits. We, too, are workers together with God. Some day he will come and to him we must give an account of what we have done with our talents, our gifts, our opportunities, our life.

The Faithful Servants

Matt. 25 : 20-23

The servant with five talents traded during his master's absence and gained "other five," and likewise the servant to whom had been given two talents "gained other two." Jesus was teaching the truth he so often repeated—that the true life was a life of service, of ministry to others, and that those who "traded" with their gifts and opportunities were like Christians who did good in the world.

The reward of faithful service is not only approval and praise but advancement and increased responsibility. The faithful servant was given authority over larger interests. In this bestowment of rewards two things are to be noted. In the first place, not the amount gained but the faithfulness manifested was commended. The man who gained five additional talents, and the man who gained only two were equally praised. The test was not the amount gained but the fidelity manifested. If we are faithful in a very little, we receive the same commendation as he who is faithful in larger affairs. The fidelity of a little child is as pleasing to God as the fidelity of the leaders of men. In the second place, fidelity is rewarded with increased responsibility. To him who has been faithful additional tasks are given. By using what we have, we gain more. By doing what we can, we gain the talent to do more. It is interesting also to know that faithful service on earth is rewarded by a fuller service in heaven. "The kingdom is one in heaven and on earth, and the law for both of these stages is the same. Faithful service widens opportunity."

The Unfaithful Servant

Matt. 25: 24-27

The man with one talent buried it for safe-keeping in the earth, and had nothing to show for the long years of waiting but that which originally had been given to him. He himself earned nothing. He did nothing. He tried nothing. He gave back only what had been given to him. He himself made no contribution, and he was severely punished. Life, like money, must be invested. Jesus himself said of his own life that it was like a seed, and if the seed were not buried away in the soil, it would bear no fruit. A life is lost if it has not been helpful, for no man can live to himself. To bury money in the ground is to remove it from its place and service in the world, and to do nothing, to be nothing, is to rob life of what it has a right to expect. The reasons for burying the talent may have been twofold. (1) The man may have thought that one talent was not enough to work with. Perhaps he thought that it was not worth while to try. Many people neglect using their opportunities because they are unwilling to do little things, and to serve in humble circumstances. Jesus taught the disciples the dignity of humble service when he washed their feet. (2) The man said that he hid his talent because he was afraid. He had hard and cruel thoughts of his master, and for fear of losing his talent he tried to safeguard it. In like manner when we have wrong thoughts of God, we have wrong thoughts of life. Dr. Marcus Dods has said: "All wrongness of conduct is at bottom based on a wrong view of God. Nothing so conduces to right action as right thoughts about God. If we think, with this servant, that God is hard, grudging to give and greedy to get, taking note of all shortcomings, but making no acknowledgement of sincere service, exacting the utmost farthing, and making no abatement or allowance; if we one way or other virtually come to think that God never really delights in our efforts after good, and that whatever we attempt in our life he will coldly weigh and scorn—then manifestly we shall have no heart to labor for him." How different is the Christian's thought of God. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again."

The Penalty of Unfaithfulness

Matt. 25 : 28-30

The words of the unfaithful servant, far from excusing him, judged and condemned him. His punishment was twofold. (1) The one talent intrusted to him was taken from him, and given to him who had been faithful. Talent that is not used is taken away. The fire that does not find expression is smothered, and the life that does not manifest itself dies. It is so with the Christian life. We are judged not only because of misuse of our time and talent, but also because of our neglect. To do nothing is to do wrong. In the second place, the unfaithful servant was severely punished. "Cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer dark-

ness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." Whatever else this may mean, certainly it means this—that the life of the unfaithful goes out into darkness.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. What money value had a talent? What did Jesus mean by "talents"?
2. Why were the servants with five and two talents rewarded?
3. What rewards are given for fidelity?
4. Why did the servant with one talent hide it in the ground?
5. What penalties are attached to unfaithfulness?
6. What is a successful life?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 13. How did Jesus Christ become man?

A. Jesus Christ became man by being born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea, as it had been foretold; and his name was called Jesus, which means Saviour, because he was to save his people from their sins.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Are all men created equal?
2. What is the supreme test of a successful life?
3. Give examples of those who have been faithful with one "talent."
4. Give examples of those who have been unfaithful with many talents.
5. What rewards follow a faithful life?
6. What penalties are attached to unfaithfulness?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Lesson X—JESUS AMONG HIS FRIENDS

The Golden Text—"She hath done what she could."—Mark 14 : 8.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 26: 1-13

1 And it came to pass, when Je'sus had finished all these words, he said unto his disciples,

2 Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified.

3 Then were gathered together the chief priests, and the elders of the people, unto the court of the high priest, who was called Ca'ia-phas;

4 And they took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him.

5 But they said, Not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people.

6 Now when Je'sus was in Beth'a-ny, in the house of Si'mon the leper,

7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious ointment, and she poured it upon his head, as he sat at meat.

8 But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

9 For this *ointment* might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

10 But Je'sus perceiving it said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

12 For in that she poured this ointment upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.

13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

The Time—A.D. 30. **The Places**—Jerusalem and Bethany.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, February 28	Jesus Among His Friends	Matt. 26 : 1-13.
Tuesday, March 1	The Friends of Jesus in Trouble	John 11 : 1-11.
Wednesday, March 2	Jesus and Martha	John 11 : 17-27.
Thursday, March 3	Jesus and Mary	John 11 : 28-34.
Friday, March 4	Lazarus Restored to Life	John 11 : 35-44.
Saturday, March 5	The Lord a Hearer of Prayer	Ps. 116 : 1-9.
Sunday, March 6	A Thanksgiving Prayer	Ps. 116 : 10-19

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

3. The chief priests, and the elders. They seem to have been not only the leaders, but the representatives of the people. **The court of the high priest.** The quadrangle. The house was built like a college, around a square plot of ground. **Caiaphas.** His full name was Joseph Caiaphas. He was the son-in-law of Annas. He was appointed high priest by Pilate's predecessor.

6. Simon the leper. See Mark 14 : 3 and John

12 : 1. He was probably some relative of the family at Bethany. His leprosy must have been healed, and in all probability by Jesus. It is not the same Simon as the Simon mentioned in Luke 7 : 36. There are at least nine Simons in the New Testament.

7. Woman. John gives us her name. She was Mary, the sister of Lazarus. She is not to be identified with the woman who was a sinner, in Luke 7 : 37. Matthew perhaps did not give her name because when he wrote, she was still living.

INTRODUCTION

This lesson begins the last section of the Gospel of Matthew. We have had five long discourses, the Sermon on the Mount, the ordination charge to the Twelve, the chapter on the Parables, the discourse concerning the children, and the last long discourse concerning the end of the age, contained in chs. 23 to 25. Each of the discourses ended with a peculiar phrase, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished." Matt. 7 : 28; 11 : 1; 13 : 53; 19 : 1. The last discourse ends with the phrase contained in v. 1 of this lesson, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these words." Matthew here inserts the word "all," implying that there will be no more discourses.

In this lesson Matthew suggests that the events described took place "two days" before the passover, whereas John states that the anointing of Jesus took place six days before the passover. Matthew uses the incident, however, to throw light upon the character of Judas, whose treachery follows immediately upon Jesus' rebuke.

THE LESSON STORY

The Plot Against Jesus

Matt. 26 : 1-5

It was late on Tuesday of Passion Week, and Jesus had finished his public addresses. His parables were at an end. His appeal to the people was finished. The hours that were left before his death, he spent with his disciples. He told them that after "two days" he would be "delivered up to be crucified." Jesus knew what was going on about him and the plot that was prepared against him. The conspirators had met in the house of Caiaphas, the high priest. Caiaphas had advised the Jewish leaders that Jesus should be put to death. John 11 : 50. The only thing to be decided was when and how his murder could be accomplished. They decided that it should be done quietly and in secret, and that they should wait until after the passover, when the crowds of visiting pilgrims, especially those from Galilee, would have left the city and returned to their homes. They knew that if Jesus were arrested publicly there would be a tumult. It was only the offer of Judas that made them change their plan. In the next section of the lesson, Matthew gives the reason why Judas decided to betray Jesus.

The Anointing at Bethany

Matt. 26 : 6, 7

To explain the treachery of Judas, Matthew tells the beautiful story of the anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany. John states that this anointing took place "six days" before the passover, probably on Saturday evening, the day before Palm Sunday. During his last week, Jesus made his home at Bethany, and after his busy days in the city, he retired to the quiet and friendship of the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Simon was doubtless some relative of Lazarus and his sisters and in all likelihood had been cured of his leprosy by Jesus. What a gathering it was! The healed leper, the risen Lazarus and Jesus! John tells us that the occasion was a feast given in honor of Jesus and that at the supper table, Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with very precious ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair. The story of an anointing is given in Luke 7 : 36-50, but the two women must not be identified. It was an act of loving devotion performed by Mary upon her Lord. It would be like placing in the hands of some one we love a bouquet of the choicest flowers, the perfume of which spoke our love and sympathy.

The Disciples' Indignation

Matt. 26 : 8-10

The ointment was very precious. Mark says it was worth three hundred shillings. The word in the Greek is "denarii." A denarius was worth about fifteen to seventeen cents. A denarius was a day's wage. Judas sold Jesus for thirty shekels, or about one hundred and twenty denarii, less than half the cost of the precious ointment. The disciples expressed indignation at the extravagance. They called it "waste"! It was, they thought, just as if it had been thrown away and destroyed. John tells us that the leader in this display of opposition was Judas, who said that the ointment might have been sold and given to the poor, and then he adds that Judas said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. Judas carried the bag in which the money of the disciples were placed. He acted as treasurer, and John suggests that he stole money from the funds intrusted to him. He estimated that out of three hundred shillings, he might have been able to steal quite a sum. We are often like Judas and the disciples in objecting to the way other people spend their money, and also in objecting to giving liberally even where we love much. Mary was extravagant in her expression of love for her Master.

The Reply of Jesus

Matt. 26 : 10-12

When Jesus perceived that the disciples were murmuring and objecting, he immediately came to the defense of Mary. Jesus always took the part of the person wronged, and it would have been unlike him if he had permitted such unkind criticism

to go unchecked. They were guests in the home of those who were desirous of honoring Jesus, and the conduct of the apostles was cruel and unkind. Jesus first of all answered the statement that the money might have been given to the poor by saying that the opportunity of giving to the poor would remain long after the opportunity to honor Jesus had passed, and then he undertook to explain what Mary's beautiful act of devotion meant. A hush must have come over the household as Jesus went on to explain that Mary had anointed him beforehand in order to prepare his body for burial. It was as if the flowers that are usually sent to the funeral had been sent to the sick room. Mary did not wait to show her love until Jesus had died. She openly and lovingly revealed her heart while Jesus was yet with her. It was a beautiful thing to do. It showed clearly that Mary knew what she was doing and why she did it, and it showed also that Jesus understood and had accepted her gift of love. There are other ways of doing good than giving to the poor, and there is a better time to express love and kindness than after death has forever removed those we love from our sight. If we can make any life sweeter or happier, let us do so now.

The Everlasting Memorial

Matt. 26 : 13

Jesus not only rebuked the disciples and commended Mary, he also stated that what she has done would stand as an everlasting memorial to her insight and her love. How true Jesus' words were! Nearly two thousand years after this event happened, we are reading about it and admiring and honoring Mary for her beautiful devotion to her Lord. Matthew has told the story to account for the motive which led Judas to betray Jesus. He was unable to get his hands on the three hundred shillings which the ointment might have brought if sold, and so he sold his Master for thirty shekels of silver, or one hundred and twenty shillings. The rebuke of Jesus stung Judas' conscience and urged him to evil instead of good. Nevertheless, Jesus was not taken up too much with the dark treachery of Judas to forget the sweetness and beauty of Mary's self-forgetting love.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Relate this lesson to the life of Jesus.
2. What light does this lesson throw on the character of Judas?
3. How did Mary know that Jesus was to die?
4. Does Jesus in this lesson disregard the poor?
5. Why does Jesus commend Mary and condemn the disciples?
6. How may we follow the example Mary set?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 14. How did Jesus Christ live on earth?

A. Jesus Christ lived on earth a truly human life, with its joys and sorrows, being tempted as we are yet without sin, always doing the will of God, and so setting us a perfect example.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Relate the incidents of this lesson to the character of Judas.
2. What light does this lesson throw upon the character of Mary?
3. Is extravagance ever right?
4. What abiding value has this lesson for us?
5. What light does this lesson throw upon the character of Jesus?
6. Does money given to one good cause rob another good cause?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

Lesson XI—THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Golden Text—"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."—I Cor. 11: 26.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 26: 20-30

For entire lesson, see Matt. 26 : 14-30.

20 Now when even was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples;

21 And as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord?

23 And he answered and said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born.

25 And Ju'das, who betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said.

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Ol'ives.

The Time—A.D. 30, Thursday of Passion Week. **The Place**—Jerusalem.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, March 7	Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper	Matt. 26 : 17-30.
Tuesday, March 8	Jesus, the Bread of Life	John 6 : 41-51.
Wednesday, March 9	Receiving Strength from Jesus	John 6 : 52-59.
Thursday, March 10	The Lord's Supper a Communion	I Cor. 10 : 14-21.
Friday, March 11	Reverence for the Lord's Supper	I Cor. 11 : 20-28.
Saturday, March 12	Jesus Christ Who Was Dead and Is Alive	Rom. 5 : 6-11.
Sunday, March 13	The Marriage Supper of the Lamb	Rev. 19 : 4-10.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

25. Rabbi. A Jewish word for "master," or "teacher." Judas still kept up a reverent attitude. He was a hypocrite as well as a traitor.

28. My blood of the covenant. Jesus regarded his death as a sacrifice for the sin of the world. See Ex. 24 : 8. The old covenant is displaced by the new covenant.

29. Not drink henceforth. See Luke 22 : 16. After Jesus' resurrection he would meet the disciples again, not in sorrow but in joy and victory. There may be also a reference to "the marriage Supper of the Lamb" in the Kingdom of God in glory. Rev. 19 : 9. In any event the words promise victory.

INTRODUCTION

This lesson falls into two parts. First we have the betrayal by Judas which immediately follows our last lesson. Angry and embittered at Jesus' rebuke, Judas left the supper at Bethany, and at the first opportunity bargained with the priests to betray Jesus. This bargain may have been made on Sunday or Monday. The second part of the lesson describes the passover feast and the Lord's Supper which took place on Thursday evening, the day preceding the crucifixion. Jesus kept his plans secret so that Judas might not do his work before Jesus was ready. Judas probably did not know what Jesus would do, and he could do nothing until Jesus "released him for his evil work." With the story of the Lord's Supper the events of the last lesson of Jesus' life are told without interruption. It will be our task in this lesson and the lesson of next week to follow him to the cross.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

The Treachery of Judas

Matt. 26 : 14-16

Judas had bargained with the priests to deliver Jesus into their hands. Perhaps this was done on Sunday or Monday and Judas would be watching for his opportunity. Monday Jesus had cleansed the Temple, Tuesday he had taught all day in Jerusalem. No record is given of anything he did on Wednesday. On Thursday he planned to observe the passover with his disciples, and then Judas had his opportunity. Judas knew the Garden of Gethsemane and that Jesus was accustomed to spend the night there. Thirty pieces of silver was only the price of a slave. Ex. 21 : 32. Because of this small sum, it has sometimes been suggested that avarice was not the motive of Judas. It has been suggested that Judas wished to force Jesus to show his power—to force him into a situation which would compel him to assert himself and thus reveal his true character and power. But this cannot have been the real motive behind the act of Judas. Judas had stolen money from the common treasury and had become estranged from Jesus and the other disciples. The rebuke of Jesus at the Bethany supper had brought the purpose of Judas to a climax, and in a frenzy of disappointment he betrayed his Lord. He expected a worldly empire which would give him an opportunity to make money, and he was convinced that the purpose of Jesus was altogether different from what he had expected.

The Passover Preparation

Matt. 26 : 17-19

The passover feast at which the deliverance from the Egyptian bondage was commemorated was, and still is, the great festival of the Jews. The passover began on the Sabbath which would be Friday evening, and Jesus, knowing that he would not be able to celebrate the feast at the regular time, prepared to celebrate it on Thursday evening. The disciples, knowing the near approach of the passover asked Jesus where they would celebrate it. They did not know that Jesus had already made plans. Luke tells us that he sent Peter and John and gave them directions as to how to find a room already prepared. They were to go into the city. There they would meet a man bearing a pitcher of water. Mark 14 : 13. It was the business of women to carry water, and a man bearing a water pitcher would soon be recognized. When they met him they were to say, "The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples." The man was evidently a friend of

Jesus'. The room was in all probability the "upper room" used by the disciples after the crucifixion and on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 1 : 13. It is possible that this room belonged to the mother of John Mark, the author of the second Gospel, and if this be so then the man with the pitcher may perhaps have been Mark's father.

THE LESSON STORY

Announcing the Betrayal

Matt. 26 : 20-25

It was Thursday evening when Jesus and his twelve disciples sat down to the evening meal in the room which had been prepared for them. This was probably the last meal which Jesus and his disciples shared together, and Luke tells us that he greatly desired to partake of it with them. Luke 22 : 15. While the supper was going on Jesus suddenly broke the silence with the startling assertion, "One of you shall betray me." To an Oriental it was an unforgivable sin to break faith with one with whom bread had been broken. Probably the atmosphere of dread and suspicion surrounded this supper in the upper room, for Judas was there, and Jesus knew what Judas had done, and perhaps some of the other disciples were suspicious of him, also, yet each of the Eleven looked into his own heart and gave expression instantly to his own personal allegiance. Each one replied, "Is it I, Lord?" Jesus did not openly disclose Judas, and it would seem that the disciples did not understand that Jesus had pointed him out as the traitor, for when Judas left the room the disciples mistook his motive for going. John 13 : 28-30. Perhaps Jesus gave Judas some sign which Judas alone understood. It is interesting to note how Jesus seems to have protected Judas even until the last and to have kept open for him a way of repentance. There was no word of bitterness uttered except the terrible statement, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born." We are not permitted to know what was going on in the mind of Judas. We are merely told that he withdrew and went out into the night on his dreadful errand.

The Lord's Supper

Matt. 26 : 26-28

To understand the complete account of the Last Supper read also Mark 14 : 22-26, Luke 22 : 7-30, John 13 : 1-30. What we now call the Lord's Supper was instituted at this last supper. It took place in the middle of the evening meal in the upper room on Thursday night. When they were eating, Matt. 26 : 26, Jesus took a loaf and blessed and brake and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body." Jesus took the simplest article of food and made it the symbol of the gospel. Just as bread is the food of the body, so Christ is the food of the soul.

Then immediately Jesus took the cup in which was "the fruit of the vine." When he had given thanks he gave it also to his disciples saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." These are wonderful words. It is evident from what Jesus here says that he understood fully the nature and purpose of his own death. As Moses had once made a covenant by the blood of beasts which he sprinkled on the people, Ex. 24 : 8, so now Jesus by his own blood made a new and better covenant. It is a covenant which pledges forgiveness of sin to all the world and not to the Jews only. Christ's death altered the relation of the whole world to God. How very interesting it is to remember that it was in the night on which he was betrayed that Jesus instituted the memorial Supper which has since been observed by Christians always and everywhere. If all the records of the New Testament had been lost and this memorial remained, it would still proclaim the everlasting gospel of redemption and of victory. Sometimes it is called "The Lord's Supper" because it is he who invites and we who are the guests. Sometimes it is called the "Communion" because in partaking together of the bread and the wine, we enter into "common life" with Christ and with one another. Sometimes it is called the "Eucharist" or "thanksgiving" because when he blessed the bread and the cup he "gave thanks." Sometimes it is called the "sacrament" which word means an oath or covenanted promise, and signifies the promise of loyalty which Christians make to Christ their Lord. It is our oath of allegiance to him.

The Prophecy of Victory

Matt. 26 : 29, 30

After the Supper was ended Jesus said, "I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." These are beautiful and mysterious words and may refer to the time of their reunion after the resurrection, or after the Judgment. Whatever be the time, the fact of coming victory is plainly set forth. Death would not be the end. The cross would not break their fellowship. Jesus saw in front of him the cross, but beyond the cross he saw also the new life in his Father's Kingdom. In his darkest hour he saw the bright light of the future. Jesus here suggests that the Christian life is a life of "satisfaction and repose and social joy." In this spirit of victory and assured triumph Jesus and the eleven disciples brought the solemn supper to a close by the singing of "a hymn." The hymn was one of the Old Testament psalms, sung on the night of the passover, after supper. Psalms 115 to 118. Christianity has always been a singing religion. It is the religion of joy, of assured victory. Judas, the priests, and the cross were all before Jesus, but God also was there, and where he is it is always morning. After they had sung the hymn they

passed out of the city, over the brook Kidron and on, up the hill, into the Garden of Gethsemane.

THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER

The observance of the Lord's Supper is commanded. Jesus said, "This do." It is not only a command of Jesus, but it is the last command that he gave before his death. We may not understand all that the Communion service means, but it is enough that we should do what Jesus tells us to do. In obeying him we come to understand the will of Christ.

The Communion service is not only a command, it is a commemoration. Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me." When the bread is broken we remember that Christ's body was broken for us on Calvary, and when the wine is taken, we are to remember that his blood was shed for us. We partake of the sacrament in remembrance of him, of his life and death, and of his great love for us.

The Lord's Supper is also a communion. It is the bond of fellowship between Christians and their Lord. It is a constant reminder to us that we do not live our life alone, but that we belong to a great brotherhood where "one is your Master, even the Christ."

The Lord's Supper is also a prophecy. It not only points us back to the cross, but points us forward to his coming again. We are to remember him until he comes.

The Lord's Supper proclaims the central message of the gospel—that Jesus is the Saviour. It heralds the message, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" It was the glory of Raphael to paint. It was the glory of Michelangelo to build, of Cæsar to rule, of Homer and Milton to sing, but it is the glory of Jesus "to seek and to save."

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Why did Judas betray Jesus?
2. What was the passover?
3. Give in order the events of the Lord's Supper.
4. What is the meaning of the bread in the Lord's Supper?
5. What is the meaning of the wine in the Lord's Supper?
6. Why was Jesus sure of victory?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 15. How did Jesus Christ die?

A. Jesus Christ died on the cross, the just for the unjust, that he might reconcile us to God and save us from sin.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Trace the downfall of Judas.
2. What is the difference between the passover and the Lord's Supper?
3. Explain "The Lord's Supper," "Communion," "Eucharist," "Sacrament." (See section on "The Lord's Supper.")
4. What do the bread and the wine represent?
5. What was Jesus' interpretation of his own death?
6. Show how Jesus knew that death for him meant victory.

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Lesson XII—JESUS ON THE CROSS

The Golden Text—"God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Rom. 5 : 8.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 27: 33-50

33 And when they were come unto a place called Gol'go-tha, that is to say, The place of a skull,

34 They gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink.

35 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots;

36 And they sat and watched him there.

37 And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JE'SUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then are there crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand and one on the left.

39 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads,

40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41 In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Is'ra-el; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him.

43 He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Je'sus cried with a

loud voice, saying, E'li, E'li, lama sabachtha'ni, that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 And some of them that stood there, when they heard it, said, This man calleth E-li'jah.

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether E-li'jah cometh to save him.

50 And Je'sus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.

The Time—A.D. 30, Good Friday. **The Place**—Calvary, outside of Jerusalem.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, March 14	They Crucified Him	Matt. 27 : 33-44.
Tuesday, March 15	The Story of the Cross	Matt. 27 : 45-56.
Wednesday, March 16	Jesus Foretells His Death	Matt. 16 : 21-27.
Thursday, March 17	Jesus Condemned	Luke 23 : 13-25.
Friday, March 18	Jesus Crucified	Luke 23 : 33-49.
Saturday, March 19	The Burial of Jesus	Luke 23 : 50-56.
Sunday, March 20	The Agony of the Cross	Ps. 22 : 1-5.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

Golgotha and Calvary. The name in use was "Golgotha" which means "skull." The Latin word is *Calvaria*, our "Calvary." Perhaps the word "Golgotha" referred to the shape of the hillside or knoll where Jesus was crucified. It was outside the city gates.

INTRODUCTION

It is necessary in order to follow Matthew's story of the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus not to confine attention to the verses of the lesson text but to read through the entire narrative beginning with ch. 26 : 36 and ending with ch. 27 : 66. After Jesus had finished the Last Supper and sung a hymn, he and the eleven disciples passed out of the city, perhaps about midnight, and returned to the solitude of the Garden of Gethsemane. Meanwhile Judas had gone to inform the priests, having previously betrayed Jesus into their hands; he assisted in leading the arresting party to the place where he knew that Jesus was wont to go. It must have been between the darkness and the dawn on Friday when Jesus was led a captive back into Jerusalem. This lesson story will follow step by step the events of Good Friday, the day on which he was arrested, tried, condemned, crucified, and laid in the sepulcher.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

The Garden of Gethsemane

Matt. 26 : 36-40

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus separated himself from the Eleven and sought strength in prayer. At first Peter and James and John accompanied him, but later he was alone. Three times he prayed, using almost the same words, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." After each prayer he returned to his disciples and found that instead of praying they were asleep. Jesus rebuked them very gently and bore his "agony" alone. Luke tells us that as he prayed "his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." So great was his agony that he was "greatly amazed, and sore troubled" and there appeared "an angel from heaven, strengthening him." This experience in Gethsemane leads us into the deeper mystery of the life and death of Jesus. "It cannot have been due to fear of death, for he came to Jerusalem expressly to die, and never faltered in his resolve; nor is the foreseen flight of the disciples, the treachery of Judas, the denial of Peter, and the sin of the Jewish nation in rejecting and crucifying him, sufficient to account for it. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the mystery of the atonement. He was to bear the sins of the whole world, and the thought of that awful burden oppressed him."

The Arrest of Jesus

Matt. 26 : 47-56

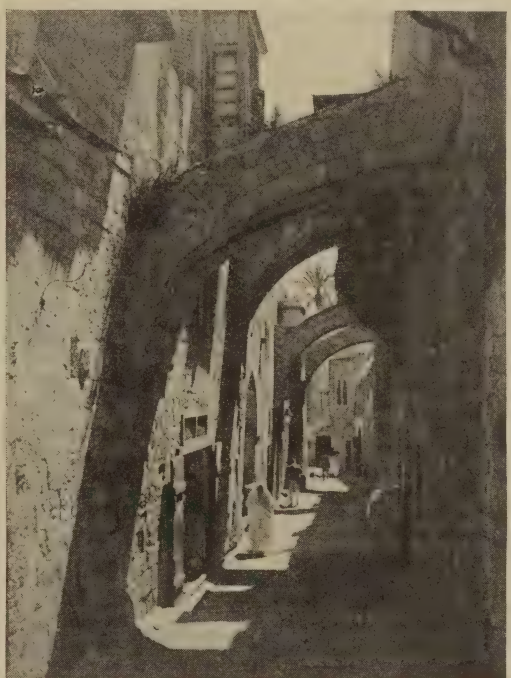
Jesus prayed until he won the victory and he was ready before he saw or heard the approach of Judas and the Roman soldiers who had come to arrest him. "A great multitude" had come with swords and staves. Perhaps they thought that Jesus would resist arrest. The leaders of the mob did not know Jesus, and Judas had arranged beforehand for his identification. Impostor and hypocrite, he had planned to kiss Jesus and by that sign to show the soldiers which man was Jesus. It is interesting to read the record of the other Gospels with their added details. John tells us that Jesus promptly disclosed himself and that the soldiers were stunned by his announcement. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all tell about Peter drawing his sword in the defense of Jesus and cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest, and John tells us that his name was Malchus. Jesus, however, healed the wounded man and ordered Peter to "put up" his sword, saying that if he asked God, there would be sent to his help "twelve legions of angels." Jesus said, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Jesus voluntarily gave himself up without resistance, charging the men who came with swords and staves with cowardice. There is a re-

buke in Jesus' words, "I sat daily in the temple teaching, and ye took me not." When the disciples saw that Jesus offered and permitted no resistance, and that he allowed himself to be led away into the city like a condemned criminal, their hearts sank and "All the disciples left him, and fled." Again we are reminded that Jesus surrendered himself. No man took his life from him. He laid it down of himself. It is a strangely solemn thought that he "loved me and gave himself up for me."

The Jewish Trial of Jesus

Matt. 26 : 57; 27 : 10

The fullest story of the trial of Jesus is given in John's Gospel. John 18 : 12-27. He had altogether six trials. He had three Jewish or Church trials, and three Roman trials. We must keep in mind the fact that Rome governed the Jews and that, although Rome gave much liberty, she kept in her own hands the power of life and death. While the Jews could recommend that Jesus should be put to death, only the Roman Government could pass sentence and carry out that sentence. The whole trial of Jesus was irregular and illegal. First of all Jesus was taken to Annas, the old high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas, the acting high priest. Jesus appeared before Annas bound and he defended himself. He was struck by one of the officers. From Annas, Jesus was led bound to Caiaphas. Caiaphas had said that Jesus should be put to death for the sake of expediency. All the evidence against Jesus broke down and they finally asked him if he were "the Christ, the Son of God." He affirmed that he was and then Caiaphas rent his garment saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy," and all those present attested that he was worthy of death. The third trial was the formal trial before the Jewish Council, or sanhedrin, and that body, having passed judgment that Jesus should be put to death, turned him over to Pilate, the Roman governor, to be sentenced, and, as they hoped, condemned.



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THE VIA DOLOROSA

Tradition says that Christ went to Calvary by this thoroughfare.

While this part of the trial was in progress other eventful things had happened. Peter had previously boldly asserted that he would never prove false to Christ, but in the open court of the high priest he had openly denied that he knew Jesus. Peter began "to curse and to swear, I know not the man." Then when the "cock crew," Peter remembered the words of Jesus and went out broken-hearted, to weep bitterly. At the same time Judas, seeing that Jesus was in the hands of his enemies and was being delivered over to death, overcome with shame and remorse, returned the thirty pieces of silver to the priests and went out and hanged himself. Peter repented and later was forgiven. Judas only regretted his failure and found no place of repentance.

The Roman Trial of Jesus

Matt. 27 : 11-32

When the Jewish council had passed sentence of death upon Jesus he was delivered into the hands of Pilate with the request that the wish of the council be fulfilled. Pilate was not interested in the religious disputes of the Jews and wished to satisfy himself as to Jesus' guilt. Although the council had condemned Jesus to death because of blasphemy, when they gave him over into the hands of Pilate they changed their charge and stated that Jesus had made himself a king, and therefore a rebel against Rome. When Pilate sought evidence from Jesus himself he received none. "He gave him no answer, not even to one word." This was the fourth trial to which Jesus had been subjected. Baffled in his examination and learning that Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate sent him to Herod who was governor of Galilee and who happened to be in Jerusalem at that time. The story of his trial before Herod is interesting. Luke 23 : 7-12. In the presence of Herod, too, Jesus was silent, and he in turn sent him back to Pilate,

who failed after many attempts to free Jesus. Pilate pleaded with the chief priests and rulers. He offered to release Jesus, but they chose Barabbas instead. Pilate had Jesus scourged. Pilate's wife warned him against condemning Jesus. The priests threatened Pilate that they would report him to Rome. They, who hated Cæsar, said, "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend." Pilate was afraid. He was not courageous enough to do right in spite of consequences and washing his hands as a sign that he was not responsible, he delivered Jesus over to the Jews to be crucified. The Jewish leaders were wild with satisfaction. They were like mad men. First they mocked Jesus, and then led him off to be crucified.

THE LESSON STORY

The Crucifixion

Matt. 27 : 33-50

Jesus had been through a terrible ordeal. He had experienced the Last Supper, the agony in Gethsemane, the betrayal, the long, cruel trial, with the scourging. He had had no sleep, and when the heavy cross was laid on him he sank beneath its load. The incidents connected with the crucifixion should be thought about and fixed in memory. (1) The compelling of Simon of Cyrene to help bear the cross with Jesus. (2) The weeping women along the route to the cross. Luke 23 : 27-32. (3) The crucifixion. (4) The two thieves. (5) The title above the cross, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." (6) The mocking, jeering multitude. (7) The words from the cross. (8) The darkness at the sixth hour. (9) The cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" at the ninth hour. (10) The sudden death of Jesus and the rending of the veil in the Jewish Temple which made visible the Holy of Holies.

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

The best way to understand the meaning and message of the cross is to gather together the seven last words which Jesus uttered while hanging on the cross.

(1) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23 : 34.
(2) "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Luke 23 : 43.
(3) "Woman, behold, thy son! Behold, thy mother!" John 19 : 26, 27.
(4) "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. 27 : 46.
(5) "I thirst." John 19 : 28.
(6) "It is finished." John 19 : 30.
(7) "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Luke 23 : 46.

The cross is the symbol of our faith. Paul said that he was crucified with Christ. We, too, can be crucified by an act of faith. We must take our place beside Jesus on his cross.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Give the events of each day of Passion Week.
2. Explain "Gethsemane," "Calvary," "Golgotha."
3. Why did not the Jews crucify Jesus without asking Pilate's permission?
4. What title did Pilate put above the cross, and what did it mean?
5. Try to tell the story of all that happened on Calvary.
6. What does the cross mean for us?

The Intermediate Catechism

Q. 16. When did Jesus Christ rise from the dead?

A. Jesus Christ rose from the dead the third day after his burial and, after forty days, ascended into heaven.

Q. 17. How will Jesus Christ come again?

A. Jesus Christ will come again with power and great glory, and will judge us all according to our works.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Give an account of the arrest of Jesus.
2. Why did Jesus pass through the agony in Gethsemane?
3. Give briefly the story of the trial of Jesus.
4. Give the seven last words on the cross.
5. What impression does the character of Pilate make upon you?
6. What is the spiritual value of the cross of Christ?

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 14. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Lesson XIII—THE LIVING CHRIST (Easter Lesson)

The Golden Text—"I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—Matt. 28 : 20.

TEXT OF LESSON, MATT. 28: 1-10, 16-20

For entire lesson, see Matt., ch. 28.

1 Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Ma'ry Mag'da-lene and the other Ma'ry to see the sepulchre.

2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it.

3 His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified.

6 He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Gal'i-lee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word.

9 And behold, Je'sus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then saith Je'sus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Gal'i-lee, and there shall they see me.

* * * * *

16 But the eleven disciples went into Gal'i-lee, unto the mountain where Je'sus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped *him;* but some doubted.

18 And Je'sus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

The Time—April, May, A.D. 30. **The Places**—Jerusalem and Galilee.

DAILY HOME READINGS

Date	Title	Reference
Monday, March 21	The Risen Christ and the Women	Matt. 28 : 1-10.
Tuesday, March 22	The Walk to Emmaus	Luke 24 : 13-27.
Wednesday, March 23	Jesus Revealing Himself	Luke 24 : 18-35.
Thursday, March 24	Jesus Appears to His Disciples	John 20 : 19-29.
Friday, March 25	Jesus Appears in Galilee	John 21 : 1-14.
Saturday, March 26	The Good News of the Resurrection	I Cor. 15 : 1-11.
Sunday, March 27	Rejoice in the Lord	Ps. 118 : 14-24.

DIFFICULT WORDS AND PHRASES

1. The other Mary. Mary, the mother of James. The women had come to anoint the body of Jesus, perhaps not knowing what Joseph and Nicodemus had done, or else wishing to do the loving act of preparing the body of Jesus, themselves.

7. Into Galilee. Jesus had promised to meet his disciples there. Matt. 26 : 32.

9. Took hold of his feet. It was not uncommon to kiss the feet in token of loving allegiance. Jesus always welcomed reverence and worship.

17. But some doubted. The words might better be translated, "But others doubted." The Eleven believed, but others who were present did not. Notice the words in v. 18, "And Jesus came." He came to remove their doubt.

18. All authority. The words mean "was given." That is, at the resurrection. The suggestion is that all the power of God belongs to Christ. God is in Christ.

19. Into the name. The first Christian creed, asserting the duty to Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity.

INTRODUCTION

This lesson closes the study of the Gospel of Matthew, which has been a six months' course The story of the resurrection is the theme.

The complete story of the resurrection should be read in all four Gospels. Matt., ch. 28; Mark, ch. 16; Luke, chs. 23, 24; John, chs. 20, 21.

BETWEEN THE LESSONS

The Burial

Matt. 27 : 57-61

Jesus died upon the cross on Friday afternoon, some time after three o'clock. According to the Jewish Law, it was not legal to let a man hang all night upon the cross. Deut. 21 : 23. Having been put to death as a criminal, Jesus had, of course, no right to an honorable burial. The Jewish Law said, "They that were put to death by the council were not to be buried in the sepulchers of their fathers." Joseph of Arimathæa, who was a disciple of Jesus and a member of the council, although he had not consented to the death of Jesus, as a favor obtained the body from Pilate. Pilate first convinced himself that Jesus was really dead and then gave his permission. So the body of Jesus was laid away in Joseph's new tomb, in a near-by garden.

The Watch at the Sepulcher

Matt. 27 : 62-66

If the disciples and the loving women rested on the Sabbath according to the Law, the chief priests and the Pharisees were restlessly busy. Luke 23: 56. They were afraid, and begged from Pilate a guard to watch the grave. They called to remembrance that Jesus had said something about rising again. Pilate, at their request, ordered a guard of soldiers to keep the sepulcher. They put the imperial seal of Rome

upon the stone that had been rolled against the door of the tomb and stationed the soldiers there to keep sentinel. A "guard" usually consisted of four soldiers. We are glad now that the enemies of Jesus were so careful and so anxious to secure the safe-keeping of the grave.

THE LESSON STORY

The Gospel of the Resurrection

Matt. 28 : 1-10

Matthew tells that the resurrection was preceded by an earthquake and that an angel in white rolled away the stone from the door and sat upon it. "His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow." The soldier guards were stunned and "became as dead men."

Very early on Sunday morning, while it was yet dark, Mary Magdelene and Mary, the mother of James, came to the sepulcher. They came "to see." Some one has said that the women who loved and followed Jesus were "last at the cross and first at the tomb." The women had been debating as to how they could have the stone removed, Mark 16 : 3, but they found that the stone was removed and that their spices were not needed. The angel quieted their fears by saying, "Fear not ye." They were words such as Jesus himself would have spoken. Then the women were told how and where they would find Jesus. "He is not here; for he is risen."

The Risen Christ

Matt. 28 : 9, 10

The women hastened from the tomb "with fear and great joy" in order to inform the disciples and, as they went in obedience to the word of the angel, "Jesus met them." What a surprise it was! What a meeting it must have been! He met them with words of victory, "All hail." It was the common Jewish salutation, but it spoke of life and triumph. They fell at his pierced feet to kiss them, and there they waited and worshiped until their fears were quieted and he bade them finish their errand to the disciples, promising to reveal himself in Galilee.

The Report of the Watch

Matt. 28 : 11-15

It would be interesting to know what the Roman soldiers who had acted as guards at the sepulcher said to the priests. No hint is given as to whether they knew the facts connected with the resurrection or not. It may be that, overwhelmed by the shock of the earthquake, they knew nothing. The priests however gave them "large money" to swear to a lie, to the effect that the disciples of Jesus had stolen the body while the guard slept, and so the lie was "paid for and propagated." There is no way to account for the empty tomb except by the fact of the resurrection. The story circulated by bribery was of course a lie, and if true, would have made all the disciples impostors and deceivers and guilty of fraud, which is impossible.

The Great Commission

Matt. 28 : 16-20

The disciples, following the advice given them by the women, went to Galilee and there on the mountain Jesus met them. When they saw him they worshiped him, but others who were present doubted until Jesus "came to them." It is interesting in this connection to read the opening verses of the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians, where Paul gathers up the several appearances of Christ after his resurrection. Jesus was careful to remove all doubt of the reality of his resurrection. The additional information furnished by Mark, Luke, and John must be filled in to compete Matthew's story. John tells us that on the first Easter evening, Jesus met with ten disciples in the upper room, at Jerusalem and that on the following Sunday, when Thomas also was present, Jesus appeared to them again. Matthew, however, tells of the meeting in Galilee and the last words of Jesus to his disciples. These last words contain a great claim, a great charge, and a great promise. (1) The great claim was that all authority had been given unto him. (2) The great charge was to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them. (3) The great promise is "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

THE EASTER MESSAGE

The Christian Church was born on Easter Day. When Jesus was crucified, the hope of the disciples died. When Jesus rose again, hope revived.

The resurrection of Jesus was the vindication of his life and teaching. He rested his authority upon the fact that he would, if crucified, rise again.

The resurrection of Jesus is the symbol of our resurrection. If we are crucified with Christ we may also rise with him.

FOR INTERMEDIATE PUPILS

1. Who were Joseph and Nicodemus and what part had they at the cross?
2. Why was a guard placed at the sepulcher?
3. Tell the story of the resurrection.
4. To whom did Jesus reveal himself after his resurrection?
5. What is meant by "The Great Commission"?
6. What does the resurrection mean to us?

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

1. Show how the closing chapter of Matthew confirms the claim of Jesus to be a King.
2. What explanations have been given of the empty tomb?
3. Give a short account of the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection.
4. Why did Jesus reveal himself after his resurrection?
5. What last claim did Jesus make for himself?
6. Why have the disciples of Jesus been so long in obeying his last command?

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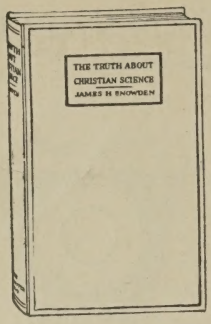

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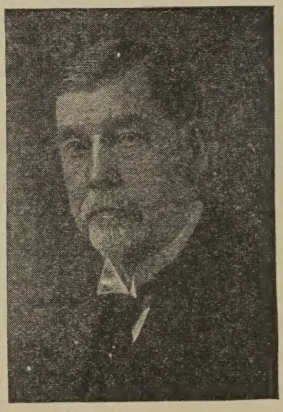

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